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**AN IRAQ C-130 AVIATION ADVISOR MISSION
AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE**

by

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Preface

The idea for this paper came after a tremendous year as commander of the personnel training the Iraqi Air Force how to fly and maintain C-130 aircraft. The overall advisor program was hastily organized and a small group of extremely capable C-130 operators and maintainers embarked on an incredible year of triumphs and challenges. The hard work, dedication, and talent of the United States advisors led to many successes in the first year. Still, it was the differences and challenges that intrigued me the most and this paper focuses in these areas.

Sitting across from the Iraqi squadron commander and discussing how to balance a concern for mission and people was a learning experience. Many of the issues weighing on his decisions were not commonplace in the United States Air Force and shaped a different way of thinking. I believe if advisors understood the factors influencing Iraqi leader and personnel decisions and actions, they could develop more effective programs, accelerate Iraqi qualifications, and limit long-term United States commitments.

Thus, I spent the last year trying to gain a better understanding of why certain challenges arose and what actions advisors could take to avoid similar problems in the future. During this same period, Central Command Air Force planners have made remarkable strides in improving advisor preparations and focusing advisor efforts across a broad spectrum of mission areas. In fact, the outline for this paper was frequently adjusted as drafted recommendations were already being implemented. Still, there is more to learn and many benefits from documenting lessons learned, gaining a clearer insight into the underlining causes of advisor challenges, and preserving a record of this important mission for future reference.

In regards to my research over the past year, I would like to thank the Washington Institute for Near East Policy for providing me with the resources and time to write this paper. I could not have received a better education on the complex issues impacting the region or more in-depth exposure to regional leaders and experts. I would also like to thank the College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education staff for their outstanding support and dedication to ensuring Air Force Fellows received the most out of this year.

Abstract

A Headquarters Air Force integrated product team recently reviewed a Coalition Air Force Transition Team proposal to build Iraqi airpower over the next two years. While the team looked at all aspects of the plan, this paper focused on the establishment of a dedicated pre-deployment training center for aviation advisors, development of a flying training capability inside Iraq, and implementation of training pipelines for Iraqi pilot candidates and maintenance supervisors. A review of lessons learned from the initial Iraq C-130 advisor mission provided insights into challenges stemming from differences in United States advisors and Iraqi airmen in language, culture, and living environment. It applied these lessons in recommending initial steps the Coalition Air Force Transition Team should take in establishing flying training and technical training pipelines to avoid similar problems. It also reviewed pre-deployment training of general purpose forces and the integrated product team's plan to co-locate a permanent training center with the Air Force's Common Battlefield Airmen Training Center. In the end, the paper recommended the Air Force reconsider the alternative of locating the permanent center at Hurlburt Field, Florida to take advantage of the co-located advisor and cultural training centers of knowledge and greater potential for long-term success.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In January 2005, the Air Force deployed an Advisory Support Team (AST) of 35 C-130 operations and maintenance instructors to train Iraqi airmen how to fly and maintain three C-130 aircraft gifted by the United States. As the largest of the initial advisor efforts, it represented a significant first step in rebuilding the Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) and paved the way for future aviation advisor programs. Initially, advisors believed the requirement to conduct initial aircrew training in a combat zone would present the greatest challenge. To their surprise, it was the differences between the United States advisors and Iraqi airmen that had the greatest impact on the mission.

During the first year, the differences in language, culture, and living conditions created challenges with language barriers, centralized authority, poor warrant officer qualifications, and reduced training schedules. Each of these factors impacted mission progress and were likely exacerbated by the fact United States advisors did not speak Arabic, had no experience training foreign forces, and limited cultural training.

While this may surprise some, demand for qualified combat aviation advisors has outstripped capacity for years.¹ Moreover, operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have increased

¹ Col Norman J. Brozenick, *Another Way to Fight: Combat Aviation Operations* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2002), 48; Maj Thomas D. McCarthy, *National Security For the 21st Century: The Air Force and Foreign Internal Defense* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2004) 77; Jerome W. Klingaman, "Transforming CAA: Issues and Initiatives," in *Vantages Points: The Use of Air & Space Power in Counterinsurgency Operations and the*

demand, widened the gap, and forced the Air Force to task general purpose forces to fill almost all Iraqi aviation advisor billets. In an effort to assist general purpose forces filling advisor billets, this paper will attempt to analyze why C-130 advisor mission challenges developed and formulate lessons learned.

This endeavor is especially timely given the Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF) vision for developing IqAF airpower over the next two years. Specifically, CENTAF has developed a comprehensive plan to build Iraqi airpower, which aggressively projects a 200 percent increase in IqAF personnel and aircraft and calls for an associated 300 percent increase in Air Force advisors.² CENTAF's Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT) recently briefed the plan to an Air Force integrated product team (IPT) whose charter was to apply Headquarters Air Force and major command expertise to help CENTAF achieve its goal.³ As part of the overall effort, the IPT's theater and CONUS training teams were given the responsibility for developing plans to establish Iraqi flight and technical training schools as well as a dedicated pre-deployment training center to better prepare general purpose forces for advisor duties.

The two training teams relied on previous briefings, personnel familiar with the mission, and trips to Iraq in order to build training timelines, establish course recommendations, and anticipate problems. This paper will provide the first source of documented lessons learned from a previous Iraq advisor mission and goes a step further by applying these lessons to formulate recommendations on how each team could improve their current implementation plans. A

Global War on Terrorism, Proceeding of the 2005 Air and Space Power Strategy Conference (Alexandria, VA: Institute of Defense Analysis, 2005) 82; and Maj Richard D. Newton, *Reinventing the Wheel: Structure Air Forces for Foreign Internal Defense* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1991) 18.

² Brig Gen Stephen L. Hoog, Commanding General, Coalition Air Force Transition Team, Briefing "Coalition Air Force Transition Team" (FOUO) slides 5-6.

³ Bruce Lemkin, Deputy Under Secretary Air Force International Affairs, Briefing, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report," 8 March 2007, slide 6.

review of previous pre-deployment advisor efforts and analysis of Air Force advisor expertise will also contribute to recommendations regarding the final location of the pre-deployment training center.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is threefold: present a historical record of the Iraq C-130 AST mission; provide an analysis of challenges and lessons learned from the C-130 mission; and develop recommendations to enhance advisor preparation and efforts included in the CENTAF proposal. In achieving this goal, the paper will review how the Iraq C-130 AST mission was established; address the language, cultural, and environmental challenges and lessons learned; provide an overview of the CENTAF proposal to develop Iraqi airpower; and finally, recommend a pre-deployment training course of action, early steps CAFTT can take to enhance the success of its Iraq flying training mission, and refinements to proposed officer and enlisted training pipelines.

Chapter 2

ESTABLISHING AN IRAQI C-130 ADVISOR MISSION

The initial need to police more than 3,500 miles of border, monitor national assets, deploy security forces, and airlift senior government officials led to the rebuilding of the Iraqi Air Force.⁴ Given the mission requirements, initial efforts focused on acquiring surveillance aircraft, fixed-winged transportation, and rotary lift. This chapter will focus on the acquisition of C-130 aircraft for the IqAF and establishment of the Advisory Support Team mission. As background, the discussion begins with the Iraqi request and United States actions to identify C-130 aircraft, initial funding, and advisors. It concludes with a review of command relationships and establishment of CAFTT to provide an initial understanding of existing chains of command and the organizations responsible for aviation advisor operations in Iraq.

The Requirement

On 28 June 2004, Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) assumed authority for the governance of Iraq from the Coalition Provincial Authority and Ambassador Paul Bremer. In the near-term, Allawi faced the daunting task of unifying a shattered Iraq and garnering support for upcoming governmental elections and a constitutional

referendum. The pending national elections would play out on the world stage and become an important measure of progress in Iraq and United States success in the region.

In carrying out his duties and spreading his unity message, Allawi was often forced to travel by air to avoid the insurgent threat. As the IqAF did not possess any passenger aircraft, Allawi had to rely on US military C-130 aircraft for transportation. This became problematic as the US C-130s with American flags prominently displayed on the tail hindered IIG legitimacy efforts and stood in stark contrast to Allawi's proclamations of an independent Iraq. Recognizing the contradiction, the IIG sent a request to United States leaders in mid-October 2004 for C-130 aircraft of their own.⁵ Moreover, the IIG wanted to accept delivery of the aircraft before the upcoming 30 January 2005 governmental elections, which created a short 90-day timeline to complete the transaction.⁶

Aircraft Identification and Funding Support

The Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs (SAF/IA) is responsible for coordinating and liaising with all interested parties on the sale of Air Force equipment to foreign governments and was assigned the task of meeting the IIG request.⁷ The specific responsibility for conducting the day-to-day coordination for the Iraq C-130 transfer was given to Colonel John McCain, Chief of the Gulf Cooperation Council Division. Given the short timeline, McCain quickly dismissed any thought of trying to execute and fund a full Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case through normal channels. As an alternative, he quickly

⁴ J. Pepper Bryars, "Development of the Iraqi Air Force" *News Release Coalition Provincial Authority*, 17 April 2004, http://www.cpa-iraq.org/pressreleases/20040417_air_force.html.

⁵ Col John M. McCain, "Genesis for the new Iraqi Air Force: Security Assistance in Action," *DISAM Journal of International Security Assistance Management* 28, no. 1 (Fall 2005): 26

⁶ Ibid.

formed a C-130 transfer team of experts from Headquarters Air Force, Air Force Security Assistance Center, Air Mobility Command (AMC), Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, Air Force Security Assistance Training Squadron, Air Education and Training Command's International Affairs Office, United States Central Command (CENTCOM), CENTAF, and Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I).⁸ The C-130 transfer team was able to simultaneously work the multitude of issues required for the transfer and completed the deal. In the end, McCain credited the high priority given to the request by senior leaders and open dialogue within the transfer team as the key factors enabling them to quickly identify and fund initial support for three C-130 aircraft.⁹

Three C-130E Aircraft

The first step in the process was finding available C-130 aircraft. The team was hoping to use the Foreign Assistance Act and Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program to transfer the aircraft at no cost.¹⁰ Following a review of its inventory, the Air Force was able to declare three of its C-130 E-model aircraft as excess and available for transfer.¹¹ On 17 December 2004, SAF/IA notified Congress of the pending transfers and received approval four days later to send aircrafts 62-1839, 62-1826, and 63-7826 through an EDA grant to Iraq at no cost.¹²

⁷ Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs, "Guiding Principles," <http://www.safia.hq.af.mil/internet/Index.htm>

⁸ McCain, Genesis for the new Iraqi Air Force, 26.

⁹ Ibid, 27.

¹⁰ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Program Definition of Excess Defense Articles," <http://www.dsca.osd.mil/programs/eda/progdef.htm>.

¹¹ McCain, Genesis for the new Iraqi Air Force, 27.

¹² Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Excess Defense Articles Search," <http://www.dsca.osd.mil/programs/eda/results.asp>.

Since the average age of the active duty C-130 fleet is 42 years, the fact all three aircraft identified for transfer were built between 1962 and 1963 should not be a surprise.¹³ Nevertheless, the Air Force made an effort to provide aircraft with relatively few equivalent baseline hours (EBH) as compared to other C-130s in the same production years.

Table 1. Aircraft Flight Hours

| Iraq Tail Numbers | Airframe | Equivalent Baseline (Rank¹⁴) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 301 (62-1839) | 25,075 hours | 31,700 hours (44) |
| 302 (62-1826) | 23,500 hours | 29,185 hours (26) |
| 303 (63-7826) | 20,150 hours | 25,600 hours (2) |

Source: Peter J. Christianson, Engineer, Warner Robins Air Logistic Center, GA, to the author, email, 17 March 2005. Flight hours are based on February 2005 data.

Equivalent baseline hours are important because aerospace engineers use EBH not actual airframe hours to determine when to inspect the C-130 wing boxes for cracks, institute flight restrictions, and ground the aircraft. The propensity for cracks in C-130 wing boxes has led the C-130 System Program Office at Warner Robins Air Logistics Center to recommend flight restrictions on aircraft exceeding 38,000 EBH. The recommended flight restrictions render the aircraft combat ineffective and limit their use to training and limited peacetime missions.¹⁵ When the aircraft reach 45,000 EBH they are grounded and no longer flyable.

Assuming the IqAF would accept the same recommendations, it was important to look at the potential lifespan of the identified aircraft. The transfer team assumed the aircraft would average approximately 500 EBH a year, which provided at least 10 years of use prior to any

¹³ Statement of Lt Gen Donald Hoffman, Military Deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Air Force Airlift and Tanker Programs, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces of the House Armed Services Committee*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 7 March 2007, 5.

¹⁴ Ranking of the 138 1962-63 C-130s in the USAF inventory with 1 having the least and 138 having the most Equivalent Baseline hours.

¹⁵ Hoffman, Air Force Airlift and Tanker Programs, 7.

restrictions and over 20 years before the grounding of the first aircraft.¹⁶ Given the no cost transfer of the aircraft, these lifespans were deemed acceptable.

Initial Funding

The transfer team was not as fortunate when searching for low-cost options to fund support equipment and replacement parts for the three aircraft. There were only a small number of aircraft parts available through the EDA program and aircraft support equipment was short even within the United States Air Force. Consequently, SAF/IA needed to find another funding source to bridge the gap between delivery of the aircraft and the time it would take to execute and obtain Iraqi funding for a full FMS support case; which SAF/IA estimated as April 2005.¹⁷

In the short-term, funding for spare parts was critical to provide replacement engines and other parts to keep the Iraqi aircraft in the air pending the final FMS case. Initial funding was also important to accelerate the ordering and purchase of support equipment. Aircraft generators, all-terrain forklifts, maintenance stands, and tow vehicles are just a few examples of equipment that can take more than a year from purchase to delivery. The sooner funding was secured and orders placed, the sooner equipment would begin arriving in theater and on-loan equipment could be returned to US units.

The search for a funding source eventually led the transfer team to the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, which assumed responsibility for training all Iraqi security forces after the departure of the Coalition Provincial Authority. Their mission was to “organize, train, equip, and mentor Iraqi security forces, in order to support Iraq’s ultimate goal of a unified,

¹⁶ Lt Col Peter Higgins, Flight Commander, Iraq C-130 Military Transition Team, to author, email, 7 February 2007. According to Iraqi Air Force data from January 2005 to January 2007 the aircraft have actual averaged approximately 400 hours a year.

¹⁷ McCain, Genesis for the new Iraqi Air Force, 26.

stable, and democratic Iraq.”¹⁸ They were also responsible for allocating the initial 5.8 billion dollars Congress provided for training and equipping Iraqi security forces.¹⁹ As the IqAF C-130 mission fell into the category of security forces training, MNSTC-I agreed to provide 45 million dollars of initial funding to bridge the gap.²⁰ The initial funding proved instrumental in enabling uninterrupted operations during the first year as the funding gap proved much larger than initial estimates with Iraq not funding the follow-on FMS support case until 18 December 2005.²¹

Selecting Iraq C-130 Aviation Advisors

As SAF/IA and the C-130 transfer team coordinated for delivery of the aircraft and support funding, they were also working closely with CENTAF to define the requirements for training Iraqi airmen. The team recognized a group of advisors were needed to simultaneously fly Iraqi aircraft in support of Iraqi airlift requests and train Iraqi airmen to assume the mission. After consulting C-130 experts and working with the transfer team, CENTAF’s Request for Forces identified 35 aviation advisor positions.

¹⁸ House, *Building Iraqi Security Forces*: Hearings before Subcommittee on National Security Emerging Threats, and International Relations, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 2005, 109-19.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ United States of America Letter of Agreement Y7-D-AAA PL 108-106, 14 January 2005.

²¹ Coalition Air Force Transition Team Situation Report, 20 December 2005.

Table 2. Iraqi C-130 Request for Forces

| Duty Position | Number | Tour Length |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| AST Flight Commander/C-130 Evaluator Pilot | 1 | 365 |
| C-130 Maintenance Officer | 1 | 365 |
| C-130 Evaluator/Instructor Pilots | 4 | 180 |
| C-130 Evaluator/Instructor Flight Engineers | 4 | 180 |
| C-130 Evaluator/Instructor Navigators | 4 | 180 |
| C-130 Evaluator/Instructor Loadmasters | 4 | 180 |
| Aircrew Life Support Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| Air Transportation Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| Aerospace Maintenance Superintendent | 1 | 180 |
| Production Superintendent | 1 | 180 |
| Supply Management Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| C-130 Maintenance Crew Chief | 3 | 180 |
| Aerospace Propulsion Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| Aircraft Hydraulic System Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| Electrical/Environmental System Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| Communication, Navigation, Mission Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| C-130 Instrument and Flight Control Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| Electronic Warfare Craftsman | 1 | 180 |
| Crew Chief/Quality Assurance | 1 | 180 |
| Support Section Non-Commissioned Officer | 1 | 180 |
| Debrief/Maintenance Operations Center | 1 | 180 |

CENTAF also requested four additional billets to support AST operations: Director, Iraq C-130 program manager, based in Baghdad and working in the MNSTC-I Coalition Military Advisory Transition Team-Air (CMATT-A) for 180-day tour; C-130 Squadron Commander, commanding 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron (EAS) and AST for 365-day tour; 6th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) aviation advisor, assigned with AST for 180-day tour; and Cryptologist (active duty interpreter), assigned with AST for 180-day tour. Unfortunately, the Air Force was unable to fill the last two positions and the AST never received 6th SOS or Air Force linguistic support during the mission.

C-130 General Purpose Forces

After receiving the CENTAF Request for Forces, the Air and Space Expeditionary Force Center tasked AMC and Eighteen Air Force to work with Air Education and Training Command (AETC) to identify individuals to fill the AST billets. AMC offered a pool of instructors with

recent Iraq combat experience and AETC provided instructors with experience conducting C-130 initial and mission qualification training required for the mission. Each of the commands requested volunteers for a short-notice deployment to Iraq to train Iraqi airmen. After receiving names from both commands, Eighteenth Air Force was able to select a very experienced group of C-130 operations and maintenance instructors.

Table 3. Advisory Support Team Summary

| Duty Positions | Rank | | | | | | Command | | Years of Service |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| | Maj | Capt | SMS | MSG | TSG | SSG | AMC | AETC | |
| Flight Commander | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | 16 |
| Pilots | 4 | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 14.25 |
| Navigators | 1 | 3 | | | | | 2 | 2 | 8.5 |
| Flight Engineers | | | | 4 | | | 2 | 2 | 17.25 |
| Loadmasters | | | | 3 | 1 | | 4 | | 18 |
| Aircrew Life Support | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | 16 |
| Maintenance officer | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | 12 |
| Maintenance Superintendent | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 23 |
| Production Superintendent | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | 20 |
| Maintenance Crew Chiefs | | | | | 3 | | 2 | 1 | 14.6 |
| Quality Assurance | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 19 |
| Support Section NCO | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | 20 |
| Debrief Operations Center | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 16 |
| Maintenance Craftsmen | | | | 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 16 |
| Totals | 7 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 7 | 1 | 25 | 10 | 16.47 |

While the selected advisors were C-130 experts, they were not specifically qualified or trained to advise foreign aviation forces. The Air Force maintains only a small cadre of 110 trained and qualified combat aviation advisors in the 6th SOS to assist, train, and advise foreign forces.²² They are regionally organized, culturally astute, and possess the necessary language skills to execute combat aviation advisor missions.²³ Unfortunately, the initial aircrew training requirement was outside their mission focus area. As stated by Thomas McCarthy in *The Air Force and Foreign Internal Defense*, “The current Air Force structure of only one combat aviation advisor squadron is not well suited to performing basic flight training and, instead,

²² Lt Col Daniel Grillone, Commander, 6th Special Operations Squadron, interviewed by author, 8 November 2006.

concentrates on advancing the tactical skills of existing air forces.”²⁴ More importantly, the size and length of the Iraqi C-130 advisor mission exceeded 6th SOS capacity.

The United States Special Operations Command has taken initial steps to address the combat aviation advisor shortfall by announcing a 120 billet increase.²⁵ Still, the increase will do little to reduce the tasking of general purpose forces to fill advisor billets, which are projected to exceed 600 in Iraq and Afghanistan alone.²⁶ Since 6th SOS advisors were unavailable, the Air Force had to sacrifice expertise in training foreign forces for expertise in accomplishing the C-130 mission.

In an attempt to impart some just-in-time advisor training, Eighteenth Air Force was able to schedule an abbreviated three-day Middle East Orientation Course (MEOC) at the USAF Special Operations School (USAFSOS) at Hurlburt Field, Florida. During the course, the AST received a quick review of Iraq history, origins and differences of Shia and Sunni religions, Arabic naming nomenclature, and Arabic civilian cultural norms and sensitivities. The AST was also able to meet with combat aviation advisors from the 6th SOS for a two-hour discussion on training foreign forces. A complete discussion of pre-deployment advisor training and future concepts is reserved for a later chapter.

Immediately following the three-days of training, the AST deployed to Iraq with the aircrews flying the aircraft selected for transfer and the rest of the advisors boarding a

²³ Col Norman J. Brozenick, *Another Way to Fight: Combat Aviation Operations* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2002), viii.

²⁴ Maj Thomas D. McCarthy, *National Security for the 21st Century: The Air Force and Foreign Internal Defense* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2004) 62.

²⁵ Statement of Vice Adm Eric T. Olson, Deputy Commander, United States Special Operations Command, in Senate, *Capabilities and Force Structure of the United States Special Operations Command to More Effectively Combat Terrorism*, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 2006, 13.

²⁶ Lemkin, Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report, slide 9.

commercial aircraft and arriving the following day. Once in country, the advisors were briefed on command relationships.

Command Relationships

In coordination with CENTAF and, more specifically, Brigadier General Mark Zamzow, the Director of Mobility Forces, a plan was conceived to beddown the AST and new Iraqi C-130 squadron at Ali Base, Iraq. Iraqi Squadron 23's permanent base, New Al Muthana Air Base (NAMAB), at Baghdad International Airport was still under construction and the local threat was too high for conducting initial flight training. Located in Shia dominated southern Iraq and approximately 30 miles west of Al-Nasariyah, Ali Base was a much more permissive training environment and contained the infrastructure to support training operations.

The centerpiece of Zamzow's plan was to co-locate the Iraqi squadron with an existing US C-130 squadron. The 777th EAS of four aircraft and associated operations and maintenance personnel had recently moved from Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan to help reduce the number of Army convoys on the treacherous Iraqi roads. The only change CENTAF officials chose to make prior to Squadron 23's arrival was to swap the unit flying 1990s C-130 H3-models with a unit flying 1960s C-130 E-model aircraft. The change aligned parts and maintenance specialties, but more importantly, demonstrated the fact US squadrons were flying similar 1962-63 C-130 aircraft.

Co-locating the AST mission with an existing C-130 squadron provided many benefits. The US squadron provided the AST with all the necessary tactics, communication, aviation resource management, computer, supply, administrative, and infrastructure support to train the Iraqis and fly operational missions. As Iraqi capabilities came online, they would assume the

various functions. Another important step in enabling immediate training operations was the addition of a second four-ship maintenance package under the US squadron to maintain the additional three Iraqi C-130 aircraft on the ramp. This enabled the AST and Iraqi aircrew to fly Iraqi aircraft maintained and supported by US personnel and equipment. As Iraqi maintainers completed their initial classroom instruction, they would begin taking over flight line duties and the additional US maintenance personnel would return to their home stations.

The command relationships for the AST and Iraqi squadron were straight forward:

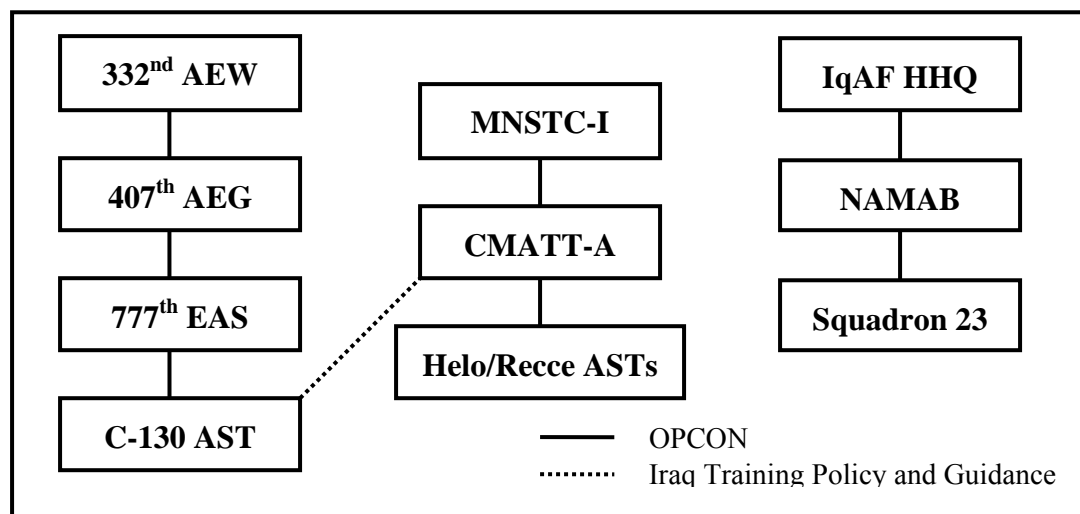


Figure 1 Command Relationships

As depicted, the AST would reside within the 777th EAS and CENTAF would maintain operational control (OPCON) through its US units in Iraq. MNSTC-I through CMATT-A would provide all Iraq training policy and guidance and maintain OPCON over the other ASTs in Iraq. Squadron 23 remained within its Iraqi chain of command through the Base Commander at NAMAB to the IqAF Higher Headquarters (HHQ). Appropriately, the US instructors as advisors were not in the Iraqi airmen's chain of command.

Coalition Air Force Transition Team

Before discussing the AST mission, it is important to introduce the Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT). CAFTT did not exist through much of the first year of AST training, but stood up in November 2005 following a CENTAF operational assessment of Iraq advisor operations.²⁷ The impetus of the operational assessment was a request from the Iraqi Air Force Chief of Staff to then United States Air Force Chief of Staff, General Jumper, for additional assistance in rebuilding the Iraqi Air Force.²⁸ Although never stated, the crash of an Iraq Comp Air 7SLX and the deaths of an AST advisor pilot, an Iraqi copilot, and three US special operations personnel likely contributed to the assessment as well.

The CENTAF assessment team came away with several findings and recommendations to improve advisor operations in Iraq. Foremost, they determined the advisor support teams lacked a clear chain of command.²⁹ Unlike the C-130 AST, the helicopter and Reconnaissance (Recce) ASTs were loosely OPCON'd to MNSTC-I through CMATT-A and not associated with any of the command organizations on the bases from which they operated. Furthermore, the assessment team determined the overall Air Force advisor mission lacked a clearly defined end state or significant presence at the Army-centric MNSTC-I. Their primary recommendation at the conclusion of their assessment was to establish an Air Force organization to oversee and provide a single focus to IqAF advisor operations.³⁰ Subsequently, all the ASTs were placed under CAFTT with an Air Force Brigadier General leading the organization and establishing Air Force advisor policy and guidance in Iraq.

²⁷ Col Michael T. Byrne, Commander, 609 Combat Operational Squadron, Briefing "IqAF Assessment Outbrief," (FOUO), 27 October 2005, slide 3.

²⁸ Lt Gen Walter E. Buchannan, Commander, United States Central Command Air Forces, Briefing "New Iraqi Air Force," (FOUO), 25 Aug 2005, slide 7.

²⁹ Byrne, IqAF Assessment Outbrief, (FOUO) slide 3.

Since its inception, CAFTT has assumed responsibility for the overall execution and planning of the IqAF advisor program. In this capacity, they have inserted strategic advisors at the IqAF HHQ and assumed responsibility for pre-deployment advisor training. Both of these initiatives were important improvements and discussed in greater detail later in the paper. CAFTT is also the lead CENTAF organization for proposing how to build Iraqi airpower. As the IPT completes its initial efforts, CAFTT will be responsible for executing the approved plan and making the necessary adjustments to ensure success. With a clear understanding of the requirement, advisors, and organizations involved, it is time to examine the problems encountered by the AST in their first year of training Iraqi airmen.

³⁰ Ibid, slide 22.

Chapter 3

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND INSURGENT CHALLENGES

On 14 January 2005, the AST instructors and Iraqi airmen met at the C-130 transfer ceremony at Ali Base, Iraq. Other than flying and maintaining aircraft, the AST instructors and Iraqi airmen had little in common. The Iraqis came from a different culture, their Air Force was in the processes of rebuilding, and their country was being torn apart by an insurgency. The later two factors coupled with the AST's inexperience with Arab culture and training foreign forces likely exaggerated existing differences and created unexpected impacts on training. Moreover, the AST's tendency to mirror image led to the implementation of processes and standards that were often incompatible with the Iraqi hierarchal structure and individual capabilities.

This chapter will discuss AST issues in language, centralized authority, poor warrant officer qualifications, reduced training schedules, and associated lessons learned for each. Where applicable a discussion of Arab culture is included to offer a possible explanation for the behavior and indication of similar behavior in the future. Where culture biases were not present, the author attempted to provide alternative explanations gleaned from conversations with Iraqi leaders and squadron members during the year of training. Several of the examples included are first-hand author accounts; however, an effort was made to footnote supporting documentation when available and applicable to the discussion.

Squadron 23 Airmen

It is important to begin this discussion with background information on the Iraqi airmen. They consisted of operations and maintenance personnel and arrived in two groups for training. The first group arrived in January and consisted of 21 operations and 45 maintenance personnel. The second group arrived in June and consisted of 20 operations and 23 maintenance personnel. The original 119 personnel attrited to 96 for various reason to include concerns of security, family, rank, health, or family connections with insurgents.³¹

Qualifications

Operations personnel included pilots, navigators, flight engineers, loadmasters, and life support technicians. Maintenance was made up of an officer-in-charge, superintendent, production supervisors, crew chiefs, quality assurance, support section specialists, operations center specialists, propulsion craftsmen, avionics craftsmen, electronic and environmental craftsmen, electronic countermeasures craftsmen, hydraulic systems craftsmen, non-destructive inspection craftsmen, air transportation craftsmen, and supply management craftsmen.

All Squadron 23 personnel were previous members of the IqAF with operations and maintenance experience flying and maintaining mobility IL-76, An-12, An-24, and An-26 aircraft or executive Falcon and Jetstar aircraft. They were subsequently contacted by a senior IqAF officer and asked to join the new Air Force.³² The senior officer's opinion was the only vetting mechanism for personnel returning to the Air Force.

³¹ Lt Col Michael Bauer, Commander, 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, Briefing, "CENTAF Leadership Brief," 21 October 2005, slide 8.

³² Colonel Samir, Commander, Squadron 23, interview by author, 12 February 2007.

Rank

All of the enlisted personnel entered the new Air Force at the highest enlisted rank of warrant officer. The majority of officers entered the Air Force as majors and captains; but in June 2005, all Iraqi officers were promoted to lieutenant colonel or their previous IqAF rank whichever was lower.³³ In the author's opinion, the reason for maximizing the rank structure was to provide the highest salaries possible for those coming back into the Air Force. In the end, most personnel entered or were quickly promoted to the highest rank they would likely achieve in the new Air Force.

Age

The Iraqi airmen were much older than their AST instructors. The IqAF did not bring in many recruits after the first Gulf War resulting in very few personnel under the age of 30 in the new Air Force. The majority of operations personnel were in their mid to late forties with some reaching into their fifties. The youngest pilot, navigator and flight engineer were 39, 37, and 27 years old respectively.³⁴ In maintenance, the youngest individual was 29 with the majority of personnel in their late thirties to mid-forties.³⁵

Religious Sects

The Shia and Sunni mix of the squadron was approximately 55/45 with a higher percentage of Sunni officers and higher percentage of Shia enlisted.³⁶ The AST witnessed very little tension or coordination difficulties between the different sects. What they did witness was

³³ C-130 Advisor Support Team Situation Report, 19 June 2005.

³⁴ Bauer, CENTAF Leadership Brief, slide 14.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Samir, interview.

limited to enlisted personnel from the various sects not studying together or helping each other with learning the material.³⁷ Overall, sectarian differences did not significantly impact training and will not be addressed in this paper.

Language Abilities

In regards to language capabilities, most Iraqi officers could understand enough English to exchange ideas. In contrast, none of the enlisted personnel could read or speak English at a sufficient level for the exchange of concepts in a training environment. The resulting language barrier was one of the primary factors affecting training timelines and mission effectiveness.

Language Barriers

Language differences are an obvious obstacle to training, advising, and mentoring foreign aviation forces and must be considered for every mission. In this case, the AST and C-130 transfer team anticipated the language differences and had a plan to acquire interpreters and conduct English language training with Defense Language Institute (DLI) instructors. What the AST failed to anticipate was the challenges of executing both programs.

Interpreters

In an ideal world with no time constraints, Iraqi airmen would attend an English language course and have a firm grasp of English before starting aviation instruction. This is the typical path for foreign students attending formal training courses in the United States. Those not scoring high enough on the language aptitude test attend additional training at a DLI facility to

³⁷ Lt Col Roger Redwood, AST Flight Commander, Jan 05-Jan 06, interview by author, 10 February 2007.

raise their score before proceeding to formal training.³⁸ Unfortunately, the short mission timeline eliminated this sequential option and interpreters were needed to conduct simultaneous aircraft instruction and English language training.

Unable to obtain interpreters through the Air Force, the AST turned to Titan Corporation. Titan was awarded a five-year 4.6 billion dollar contract to provide linguists support to US forces and possessed Category II (CAT II) and Category I (CAT I) interpreters to assist US operations.³⁹ CAT II interpreters were US citizens with Secret clearances and received salaries in excess of 100,000 dollars a year. CAT I interpreters were local Iraqi personnel hired by Titan and received about 500 dollars a month. MNSTC-I managed the overall Titan contract for Iraq security force advisor operations and the AST was able to validate and receive funding for two CAT II and four CAT I interpreters.

Problems surfaced right away, when Squadron 23 refused to consider or interview local interpreters.⁴⁰ Insurgent activity was increasing and highly publicized attacks on Iraqi police and Army recruits were fueling Squadron 23 concerns.⁴¹ Consequently, they were immediately suspicious of local interpreters they did not know and feared might pass information to local insurgents. In particular, Iraqi airmen were concerned interpreters could pass work/leave schedules or the names of personnel in the squadron and putting their families at risk.

The AST began a review of options, but saw little chance of completing the mission without local interpreters. In operations, instructors could use Iraqi officers to translate during

³⁸ Dawn Moore, Chief Nonresident Operations Branch, , Defense Language Institute, interview by author, 6 February 2007.

³⁹ Joel Millman and Gina Chon, "Lost in Translation: Iraq's Injured 'Terps,'" *Wall Street Journal*, January 18 2007, A1.

⁴⁰ C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, 26 January 2006.

⁴¹ Steve Fainaru, "Blast at Iraqi Recruiting Center Kills 21 as Insurgency Mounts," *Washington Post*, 9 February 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7110-2005Feb8.html>. Warzer Jaff and Robert F. Worth, "Blast Kills 122 at Iraqi Clinic in Attack on Security Recruits, *New York Times*, March 2, 2005, http://www-tech.mit.edu/V125/N9/long2_9.9w.html.

pilot, navigator, and loadmaster training, but none of the flight engineers or life support personnel understood English well enough to translate. For maintenance, the commander and production supervisor spoke limited English and could continue their training, but two CAT II interpreters could not effectively cover the training requirements in the remaining 10 maintenance specialty areas.

Still, it would be difficult and perhaps immoral to force the Iraqi airmen to accept local translators without a vetting process to assuage their concerns. Sadly, there was no process to conduct an Iraqi civilian background check and investigative services could not go into town and begin asking questions without highlighting an interpreter as working for the US military. If discovered, local interpreters faced real dangers and threats to their families.⁴² Out of options, the AST forwarded the issue and bleak estimates to CMATT-A and MNSTC-I for direction.

MNSTC-I recognized this as an Iraqi issue and pushed it to the IqAF HHQ for resolution. Training slowed to a crawl as the issue worked its way through the Iraqi chain of command to the Iraq Air Force Chief of Staff, Major General Kamal. Kamal reviewed the requirement, understood the lack of alternatives, and directed the squadron to accept local interpreters and begin training.⁴³ The AST then asked the Iraqi Base Commander, Brigadier General Kareem, to conduct the interviews and select four local interpreters from Titan. The AST received four local interpreters, started training, and is unaware of any incident of a local interpreter passing information to insurgents.

⁴² Testimony of Sami “The Plight of Iraqi Refugees” Before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, January 17 2007. A former Iraq interpreter testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding the horrific attempts made on his life after insurgents discovered he was working for the Army near Mosul, Iraq.

⁴³ C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, 9 February 2005.

English Language Program

While hiring interpreters was challenging, it was not the driving factor behind establishing an English language course. The fundamental US maintenance practice of reading a step in the Technical Order (TO) and then doing the step required Iraqi maintainers to read English-only TOs.⁴⁴ Previously, Iraqi maintainers simply memorized the necessary steps for each procedure and did not reference aircraft manuals while conducting maintenance.⁴⁵

Memorization was a part of Arab culture and a carry over from their primary education system, which entailed a rigid teaching style and reliance on rote memorization.⁴⁶ A previous RAND report cites Islam as the basis for these Arab education practices,

“In Islam, knowledge is given by Allah, and teaching methods used in religious schools have been adopted by secular schools as well. Knowledge is not generally regarded as a product of human reason and thus subject to expansion and interpretation; rather it is a gift one captures and with which one is adorned. Cause and effect relationships are not stressed. Memorization and imitations are the primary learning methods.”⁴⁷

Despite this proclivity for memorization and an amazing capacity in some cases, the AST believed the US practice of referencing the TO for each step was the best method for ensuring safe and consistent maintenance procedures and demanded compliance from their students.

The English language training requirement was not a surprise and the C-130 transfer team had already coordinated with DLI for instructors. In order to teach the proper number of classes, DLI settled on deploying four instructors at a time. During the first year, DLI sent a total of 11 instructors, all volunteers and none spoke Arabic. DLI does not require its English

⁴⁴ Air Force Instruction (AFI) 21-101, *Aircraft and Equipment Maintenance Management*, 29 June 2006, 19.

⁴⁵ Major Shamel, Chief, Maintenance Officer, Squadron 23, interview by author, 12 February 07.

⁴⁶ Kenneth M. Pollack, “The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness” (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, February 1996) 61.

⁴⁷ Anthony Pascal, Michael Kennedy and Steven Rosen, *Men and Arms in The Middle East: The Human Factor in Military Modernization*, RAND Report R-2460-NA, (Santa Monica CA: RAND, 1979). 25.

instructors to speak a foreign language and actually discourages those that can from speaking to their students in their native language.⁴⁸

In regards to courseware, DLI does not have a reading comprehension only course and brought the course taught in United States, which consists of a comprehensive curriculum of basic grammar and vocabulary in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.⁴⁹ To the AST's dismay, the comprehensive language program consumed half of all training time with students attending half-day classes everyday and eventually, transitioning to full-day classes every other day as they advanced to flight line training. The time requirements for the English language training forced the AST instructors to extend initial training timeline estimates of 6-9 months to 12-18 months.⁵⁰ While a doubling of training time was certainly a concern, poor warrant officer progress in learning English was an even bigger concern.

After 10-months of language training, none of warrant officers were scoring above 40 or grade school on their English Comprehension Levels (ECL). For comparison, formal training courses in the United States require ECLs of 65-85 to begin training.⁵¹ Per DLI training guidelines, Iraqis scoring less than 29 on initial language screening should have progressed to a score of 75 after 36 weeks of training.

⁴⁸ Moore, interview.

⁴⁹ Judith Geerke, Curriculum Development, Defense Language Institute, interview by author, 6 February 2007.

⁵⁰ C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, 8 July 2005.

⁵¹ *English Language Training Support for Security Assistance Offices FY 06-07*, Defense Language Institute English Language Center, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas 1 October 2005, 4.

Table 4. DLI Program Guidance for Training Weeks Given Specified ECLs

| | To Graduate with English Comprehension Level of | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----|----|-----------|----|----|----|
| | 60 | 65 | 70 | 75 | 80 | 85 | 90 |
| If ECL is | Then Program training in the following number of weeks | | | | | | |
| 29 or less | 29 | 31 | 33 | 36 | 43 | 55 | 69 |
| 30 to 34 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 21 | 28 | 40 | 54 |
| 35 to 39 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 19 | 26 | 38 | 52 |
| 40 to 44 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 16 | 23 | 35 | 49 |
| 45 to 49 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 13 | 20 | 32 | 6 |
| 50 to 54 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 11 | 18 | 30 | 44 |
| 55 to 59 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 15 | 27 | 41 |
| 60 to 64 | | 2 | 4 | 7 | 14 | 26 | 40 |
| 65 to 69 | | | 2 | 5 | 12 | 24 | 38 |
| 70 to 74 | | | | 4 | 11 | 23 | 37 |
| 75 to 79 | | | | | 6 | 18 | 32 |
| 80 to 84 | | | | | | 11 | 25 |
| 85 to 90 | | | | | | | 12 |

Source: “English Language Training Support for Security Assistance Offices FY 06-07” *Defense Language Institute English Language Center*, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, 1 October 2005, 15.

In fact, 58 of 79 students showed no progress, regression, or invalid scores for suspected cheating by the proctor.⁵² Regrettably, DLI estimates are based on total immersion and a minimum of 30-hours of language training each week; both of which were unrealistic expectations in the training environment at the time.⁵³

While there is no single reason for the poor warrant officer performance, the AST believed a lack of consequences, embracement of past procedures, maturity, inconsistent training schedules, and a lack of commitment all played a role. The IqAF Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, and other HHQ leaders continuously expressed the importance of learning English during base visits. Yet, they failed to implement a reward or accountability program for students in

⁵² Cumulative ALCPT tests scores of September 05 testing compared to initial testing of each student.

⁵³ English Language Training Support for Security Assistance Offices FY 06-07, Defense Language Institute English Language Center Lackland Air Force Base, Texas 1 October 2005, 15. One week of training = 30 hrs of instruction and the testing is not designed to discriminate within scored range of 0-29. Based on DLIELC experience, average student will progress from zero proficiency level of 30 in about 15 weeks. The test is of no value tracking growth in this period.

English language training. This lack of incentive or accountability provided little motivation for students to assert themselves in class. Some Iraqis believed they would simply go back to memorizing the procedures after the AST departed. Other in their mid-forties and having difficulty reading and writing their own language, learning a new language was an admittedly difficult task. In addition, the half-day and every other day class schedules coupled with extended five to ten day breaks prevented the necessary amount of consistent exposure to learn a new language. Finally, the Iraqis resisted and ignored any attempts to direct English-only rules in the workplace or living areas.

All of these factors contributed to poor performance in a program that consumed 50 percent of all training time. AST maintenance instructors could not certify Iraqi warrant officers as fully qualified until they could read the TOs. Thus, the AST completed the first year of training behind schedule and a growing concern that the Iraqi airmen could remain in a training status indefinitely.

Lessons Learned

The AST challenge with hiring and vetting local interpreters highlights the need for tasking advisors with the requisite language skills to accomplish the mission. Still, Air Force efforts to increase languages skills are a distant reality and advisors will continue to confront language barriers when training foreign forces. Moreover, local interpreters are becoming increasingly important as demand for military and CAT II interpreters continues to outpace supply in Iraq. Thus, advisors must consider how best to bring local interpreters into Iraqi training operations.

If the use of local interpreters becomes necessary, advisors should allow the Iraqi unit to interview and select the individuals. This enables the Iraqi commander to participate in the

process and take ownership of the hiring. It also provides an opportunity for Iraqi leadership to express concerns about certain individuals before the hiring takes place. In most cases, Iraqi personnel are the ones at risk and should be a part of the hiring process.

While vetting is still a problem, a lie detector test may provide a potential solution. In an insurgency, counter-intelligence forces are likely to possess the capability to administer a lie detector test to check informant information. On three separate occasions, the AST with Iraqi squadron commander approval used lie detectors to question Squadron 23 personnel exhibiting suspicious behavior. While not foolproof, a lie detector test offers a potential means to vet a possible hire and assuage concerns.

For English language training, there are many lessons for future missions. First, English language training consumes vast amounts of training time. Second, every effort should be made to conduct language training prior to commencing any aviation or specialty training. If simultaneous training is required, advisors and planners should anticipate nearly a doubling in normal training timelines. Third, DLI training estimates are not accurate for simultaneous training in which the minimum training and full immersion are not possible. Finally, DLI should develop a reading comprehension-only program to provide advisors with an accelerated language alternative for countries transitioning to US aircraft for the first time.

For execution, Iraqi leadership support and student motivation are essential elements of a successful English language program. Due to a lack of demonstrated internal motivation, this requires implementation of some type of reward or accountability system to encourage student performance. Iraqi leadership must also establish and enforce a consistent training schedule with minimal breaks to allow the uninterrupted and intensive learning environment necessary for language training.

A final discussion on AST inquiries into translating TOs is also appropriate as it would eliminate the stated need for English language training. The Warner Robins Air Logistic Center Iraq program manager stated the United States had never translated TOs for any country.⁵⁴ The process was expensive and money was not allocated in the Iraq C-130 program. Security assistance officers in Baghdad were familiar with countries translating training manuals and TOs on their own, but cautioned these efforts were often abandoned due to costs or resulted in TOs being outdated as subsequent changes were not translated or translated infrequently.

The author confirmed similar results in a December 2006 interview with Colonel Selahattin Ibas, a Visiting Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy at the time and now an Operations Group Commander at Turkey's largest flight training base. During the interview, Ibas described how Turkey abandoned its initial efforts to translate T-37 and T-38 TOs due to the high cost and determination that teaching its personnel English provided a greater return on investment. Therefore, while an attractive alternative to difficult English training, the author was unable to find a successful case of a foreign country consistently translating aviation publications.

Centralized Authority

It would not surprise many regional experts to hear the AST encountered centralized authority and deference to authority when training the IqAF. Arab militaries are traditionally hierarchical with authority and decision making limited to a few key leadership positions. At the same time, Arab subordinate commanders have been known to defer to this authority, remain passive, and make few decisions on their own. Luckily, these military traits are at least

⁵⁴ Maj Gerald R. McCray, AST Maintenance Officer Jan 05–Feb 06, interview by author, 12 March 2007.

complimentary as subordinates accept centralization of authority and are often most comfortable in these structures.

While these traits are not exclusive to Arab forces, the importance of family in Arab culture promotes the manifestation of these traits in Arab militaries.⁵⁵ The family is the center of Arab society and fathers expect “respect and unquestioning compliance with their instructions.”⁵⁶ The level of deference to a father’s authority can surprise those unfamiliar with the culture. Even grown sons are known to defer to their fathers on important decision impacting their own families.⁵⁷

In the military, these cultural traits result in a few key leaders making most of the decisions, while subordinates wait patiently for a response. In *Armies of Snow and Armies of Sand*, Michael Eisenstadt and Kenneth Pollack capture the essence of this predicament,

“Arab culture adheres to the notion that change and action should come from the top of a hierarchy and be transmitted downward, that subordinates should not exercise much independent judgment, that creative approaches are generally to be avoided, and that power should be concentrated in the hands of those at the top of the hierarchy.”⁵⁸

This dynamic was foreign to AST instructors who grew up in a military that encouraged initiative, innovation, and delegation of authority to the lowest level possible. Consequently, the AST was continuously frustrated with the slow decision making process and inability to move forward on several issues. Almost every issue had to be raised to the HHQ for resolution. To make matters worse, the HHQ was overwhelmed with the responsibilities of rebuilding the Air Force and had little time to address tactical-level issues.

⁵⁵ Pollack, *The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness*, 51-56.

⁵⁶ Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society, 1945-1990*, 3rd edition (London Harper Collins Academic, 1991), 166, and Halim Barrakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), 23.

⁵⁷ Pollack, *The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness*, 65.

⁵⁸ Michael J. Eisenstadt and Kenneth M. Pollack, “The Armies of Snow and Armies of Sand: The Impact of Soviet Military Doctrine on Arab Militaries,” *The Middle East Journal* 55, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 575.

A fact confirmed, when the HHQ told the Squadron 23 commander to quit raising so many issues because they were already too busy.⁵⁹ Subsequently, the squadron commander became very selective in the issues he raised. Despite this selectivity, there was still no guarantee of a response. In the end, each of these factors made a slow hierarchal decision making structure even slower and hindered AST progress.

The AST further complicated matters through attempts to instill US processes into an Iraqi military culture it do not full understand. AST initiatives to increase flexibility and responsiveness of the Iraqi airlift system were simply incompatible with the hierarchal structure and often failed to achieve their desired results. The examples below highlight a few incidents of centralized authority, its impact on C-130 operations, and include a discussion on how the initial Air Force advisors focus at the squadron-level was inappropriate for advising this type of structure.

Squadron Positions

For any squadron to run smoothly, a sound organizational structure with competent leadership in each functional area is essential. While relatively straightforward, this was an extremely slow process in an Air Force attempting to rebuild. It took three months of coordination with squadron leadership, HHQ, and CMATT-A before Squadron 23 received an approved organizational structure.⁶⁰ After receiving the squadron structure, the AST quickly realized the squadron commander had no authority to determine who would fill each position and was waiting for HHQ direction.

⁵⁹ Samir, interview.

⁶⁰ Redwood, interview and Lt Col Terry Parson, CMATT-A C-130 Program Manager Jan-Jun 05, to author, email, 21 March 2005.

A potential inconvenient delay became an issue when the HHQ failed to fill many important squadron positions. They did designate the deputy commander and operations officer to clarify who was in command when the squadron commander was absent, but the functional areas of training, scheduling, planning, safety, intelligence, and cooperation and follow-up all remained unfilled. Without formal job assignments, scheduling, training and planning were haphazard and accomplished by whoever was not flying and designated to be in the office that day.

The AST built functional continuity books, but the Iraqis resisted providing inputs or investing time in positions they were not assigned. This reality impacted the AST's ability to build collaborative processes and use a train-the-trainer concept for squadron functional areas. In the end, the AST was able to make significant progress in flying training, but little measurable progress in functional area duties necessary for long-term squadron success.

Flights Outside Iraq

The IqAF hierarchal structure also impacted approval, funding, and personnel selections for Squadron 23 flights outside Iraq. The IqAF Chief of Staff retained approval and funding authority for all flights. This was not unreasonable given the small size of the Air Force and limited number of flights outside the country. Nevertheless, the requirement to obtain Kamal's approval hampered AST efforts to institute a responsive airlift request and execution system.

The unpredictable nature of Iraqi diplomatic relations with neighboring countries and poor planning often led to short notice airlift requests by senior Iraqi officials. In response, the AST implemented an electronic airlift request process transmitted from the requester to the HHQ Joint Operations Center (JOC) for approval. The intent was to provide request standardization, HHQ visibility of all non-training flights, and hopefully, quicker approval and responsive airlift

to senior officials. While it achieved the first two goals, it failed to accelerate the overall approval process. First, the JOC was often hesitant to contact Kamal after duty hours, which eliminated approval of next day flights after 1600 local. Second, Kamal usurped the entire initiative by instituting a requirement for the CMATT-A C-130 program manager to brief him on the funding request for all flights outside Iraq.⁶¹

Funding was an important because personal or government credit cards were non-existent and Iraqi personnel needed cash up front to pay for hotels, food, and landing fees. An accurate estimate of required funding was complicated by a lack of established per diem and lodging rates or planning factors for possible maintenance delays. This lack of standards created differing opinions on required funding and often led to haggling over finding cheaper hotels and putting multiple crewmembers in a single room.⁶² Ultimately, the approval process devolved into the program manager making multiple trips to Kamal's office over the course of several days before reaching an agreement and receiving approval for any mission outside Iraq.⁶³

To make matters worse, a Squadron 23 member had to travel to the International Zone, wait for Kamal's decision, and then arrange for transportation back to Ali Base with several thousand dollars of cash for each trip. The AST and Squadron 23 tried to solve the money transportation problem by suggesting the HHQ allow them to retain funding at the squadron-level. Ali Base had a secure safe and Squadron 23 agreed to carry only the approved amount, keep receipts, and provide copies to the HHQ on a monthly basis.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Kamal refused to consider an option allowing the squadron to control large sums of money and the dangerous process of transporting cash continued.

⁶¹ Lt Col Herbert Philips, CMATT-A C-130 Program Manager Jul-Dec 05, interview by author, 9 February 2007.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ C-130 Advisory Support Team Situation Report, 28 April 2005.

The HHQ further influenced squadron flights by attempting to designate what operations and maintenance personnel went on each trip. The HHQ considered trips outside the country as a type of reward or gift for squadron members. Regrettably, their selections disregarded what personnel might receive the best training and often led back to family or tribal ties.⁶⁵ Predictably, the squadron commander was unwilling to challenge HHQ inputs and several excellent training opportunities were lost throughout the year.

Uniform Issues

The centralization of authority and hierarchal decision making was not limited to Squadron 23. On seemingly trivial decisions even Kamal had to seek approval from the Minister of Defense (MOD) staff. For example, Squadron 23 members initially wore a hodgepodge of old Iraqi Air Force uniforms, uniforms issued for recent Jordanian training, and civilian clothes. In an effort to present a more professional image and encourage unit cohesion, the AST coordinated with HHQ to issue three sets of new uniforms to each member.

The issue was raised to the HHQ A-4 for processing and not surprisingly, he raised the issue to Kamal. The fact Kamal sent the request to the MOD staff for final approval before issuing uniforms to personnel already in the Air Force was a surprise.⁶⁶ While an extreme example for a simple decision, it is indicative of hundreds of HHQ decisions that squadron-level advisors felt helpless to influence or assist.

⁶⁵ Redwood, interview.

⁶⁶ CMSgt Darrell McKinney, Iraqi Air Force A-4 advisor Sep 05 - Jan 06, interview by author, 2 February 2007.

Misalignment of Advisor Focus

Given the centralization of authority typical of Arab forces, the initial advisor focus at the tactical-level was inappropriate and unable to effectively influence or assist senior leaders in early IqAF development. As the majority of issues were raised to the HHQ, squadron-level advisors were unable to assist, advise, or mentor senior leaders on potential solutions.

The following table provides an overview of IqAF advisor allocation in early 2005:

Table 5 Iraqi Air Force Advisor Allocation

| Base | Iraq Unit | Aircraft Type | HHQ | Sq |
|---------|--------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|
| MNSTC-I | IqAF CoS | N/A | 1 | |
| CMATT-A | N/A | N/A | 5 | |
| Ali | Sq 23 | C-130s | | 35 |
| Kirkuk | Sq 3 | Comp Air 7SLX | | 1 |
| Basrah | Sq 70 | CH-2000, SB7L-360 | | 1 |
| Taji | Sq 2 & Sq 12 | UH-1, Jet Rangers | | 3 |
| | | Total | 6 | 40 |

As depicted, the HHQ advisor effort was limited to a British Air Commodore (O-6) serving as executive assistant to Kamal and the five members of CMATT-A. In fact, CMATT-A personnel were not tasked as IqAF advisors, but coordination with the HHQ often led to CMATT-A personnel advising Iraqi staff on courses of action and needed decisions. Still, CMATT-A offices were across the International Zone from the HHQ enabling only part-time interaction. Clearly, one full-time and five part-time advisors were inadequate to mentor an inexperienced air staff attempting to rebuild an Air Force.

The CENTAF operational assessment team came to a similar conclusion and identified the lack of strategic advisors as impacting overall IqAF advisor mission effectiveness.⁶⁷ In order to remedy the situation, CAFTT diverted inbound Air Force personnel to advisor positions on the

⁶⁷ Byrne, IqAF Assessment Outbrief, (FOUO) slide 3.

air staff. An advisor was matched to A-1 Personnel, A-2 Intelligence, A-3 Operations, A-4 Logistics, A-6 Communications, and A-8 Finance; A-5 Plans and A-7 Training remained unfilled through January 2006.⁶⁸

What did the strategic advisors find as they reported to their new positions? Most found a void in functional area plans or vision as the biggest deficiency. Kamal's executive assistant and CMATT-A had worked with the HHQ to develop a strategic vision for near, medium, and long-term goals. Yet, there were no associated plans or benchmarks for achieving these ends in each directorate. Thus, initial strategic advisor efforts were dedicated to working with their Iraqi counterparts to formulate a plan to shape functional priorities and ability to track progress.

The advisors also worked to establish basic functional processes within each directorate. The A-1 advisor began working with the Iraqi A-1 to align Army Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment to air force requirements and establish personnel authorizations for each squadron.⁶⁹ Similarly, the A-4 advisor began developing vehicle authorizations and attempting to establish a distribution system to include storage, inventory, issue, and accountability.⁷⁰ The A-3 invested time drafting and publishing instructions in order to provide HHQ-level guidance for flying operations, training, and safety.⁷¹ The A-6 advisor initiated a review of IqAF communication requirements and discovered the Army construction plan failed to consider many Air Force facilities.⁷² She then worked with the Iraqi A-6 and Army to insert IqAF requirements into the overall plan and construction contracts. Finally, the A-8 advisor

⁶⁸ Coalition Air Force Transition Team, Weekly Activity Report, 10 January 2006.

⁶⁹ Lt Col John T. Demboski, Iraqi A-1 Advisor Oct 05-Feb 06, interview by author, 2 February 2007.

⁷⁰ CMSgt Darrell McKinney, Iraqi A-4 Advisor Sep-Jan 06, interview by author, 2 February 2007.

⁷¹ Lt Col Jerald G. Oliver, Iraqi A-3 Advisor Sep 05-Feb 06 interview by author, 15 February 2007.

⁷² Lt Col Christine Gramlich, Iraqi A-6 Advisor Oct 05-Feb 06, interview by author, 6 February 2007.

instituted a consistent salary disbursement plan, reimbursement system for travel, and an acquisition section to oversee the mounting purchases.⁷³

The strategic advisors also increased the effectiveness of tactical advisors. As Iraqi squadron leadership raised issues through their chain of command, strategic advisors could confirm the issue was at the directorate and provide feedback on potential responses. The strategic advisor also provided insight and advice to squadron advisors on HHQ priorities and how best to raise issues. The squadron advisors could then advise Iraq squadron leadership and improve their effectiveness in getting the equipment and answers they needed. Moreover, strategic advisors could articulate the merits of squadron-level initiatives and garner senior leader support. Sadly, squadron-level advisor efforts struggled for 10-months without the enabling support of strategic advisors or establishment of fundamental processes required to run an air force.

Lesson Learned

Centralized authority and deference to authority were both strong traits in the IqAF. Both are common in Arab militaries, stem from a cultural bias, and should be anticipated by future advisor missions. Advisors in these environments must mold expectations and institute processes consistent with the existing hierarchal structure. If delegation of authority is necessary, advisors must convince senior leaders of their merit and expect restrictions on lower-level authorities. In the short-term, advisors must learn to work within the hierarchal system and institute incremental change. As Iraqi leaders gain confidence in advisor recommendations and lower echelon commanders, advisors can introduce more flexible procedures requiring even more delegation of authority.

⁷³ Maj Yuanthony C. McCree, Iraqi A-8 Advisor Sept 05 - Mar 06, interview by author, 2 February 2007.

Advisors must also understand how the centralization of authority slows down the decision making process. They must help anticipate potential issues and encourage commanders to raise them as soon as possible. Advisors must also assist commanders with formulating an interim plan as requests are being considered. Finally, advisors must have patience and endure the slow pace of decision making within the IqAF. This may be difficult, but pushing lower-level commanders on issues they do not control is counter-productive and only highlights their lack of authority.

For deference to authority, advisors must realize how little authority tactical-level commanders actually possess. They must be careful not to push tactical-level commanders to make decisions outside their authority. First, subordinate commanders are already uncomfortable making many decisions given the previous military culture. Second, if a commander receives a harsh rebuke after following advisor advice, it reinforces their initial apprehension and they may become resentful and unwilling to heed future suggestions. In these cases, progress is slowed even more as the advisor must begin rebuilding the commander's trust and confidence. Thus, it is important to understand who has what authority and to advise commanders accordingly.

Similarly, strategic advisors must encourage senior leaders to provide clear guidance to subordinates. Guidance can take many forms, but written guidance or regulations are best in a hierarchal structure. Written guidance is concrete, undisputable, and bolsters a subordinate commander's confidence to make decisions where in the past he might have hesitated. Clear guidance also enhances advisor understanding of what issues to work at the squadron-level, what issues should be raised to HHQ, and what initiatives are impractical. It also builds a box for subordinate commander authority and creates a comfort zone for action. The goal is to create a

clear understanding of how to proceed when a lower-level commander is confronted with an issue.

Finally, strategic advisors are absolutely essential in advising hierarchal organizations. The cultural tendencies for centralization for authority and deference to authority are too strong and unlikely to change in the first few years. As a result, advisor efforts must focus more or at least as much at the strategic-level. This means having a sufficient number of strategic advisors to assist the personnel making the vast majority of the decisions. Ideally, advisor efforts should focus exclusively on higher echelons until the vision, goals, programs, and guidance are established. Once in place, squadron-level advisors can initiate their efforts to increase tactical-level capabilities and effectiveness.

If operational realities prevent a phased approach, the Air Force must ensure it has a sufficient number of strategic advisors supporting and enabling tactical-level efforts from the beginning. In hierarchal structures, the need for advisors at the decision making level can not be overstated and a failure to properly align advisor support will limit short-term success and prevent long-term sustainment of tactical efforts.

Poor Warrant Officer Qualifications

The United States military is blessed with a highly educated and motivated non-commissioned officer (NCO) force. They are capable of assuming high levels of responsibility and often take the initiative to get things done. In contrast, Iraq never attempted to build a similar competency in its warrant officer or enlisted force.

In general, Iraqi warrant officers are poorly educated, given little responsibility, and expected to do what they are told and little else.⁷⁴ Anthony Cordesman in *The Lessons of Modern War* described Iraq's military as one that,

“...lacked experienced and highly trained NCOs and which relied on junior officers as substitutes for well-trained career NCOs, thereby forging a gap between officer and enlisted personnel.”⁷⁵

De Atkine also lamented the lack of a NCO Corps in Arab militaries in *Why Arabs Lose Wars*, asserting the lack of NCO leadership in Arab militaries has led to poor technical knowledge and training of enlisted forces.⁷⁶

The AST experience draws similar conclusions as they found significant differences between US NCO and Iraqi warrant officer capabilities and motivation. The previous Iraqi military culture did not expect and failed to prepare its warrant officers to lead or take responsibility for technical aspects of the mission. Because Iraq did not appreciate the benefits of a strong warrant officer force and viewed them as a labor pool, they failed to invest in enlisted education or professionalism programs. Consequently, warrant officers tended to wait around until someone told them what to do versus taking the initiative and doing things on their own. They also struggled with the critical thinking necessary to troubleshoot problems in the aircraft or on the flight line.⁷⁷ The following discussion of warrant officer performance as flight engineers and maintenance personnel underscores the need to carefully consider where to place warrant officers in future squadron structures.

⁷⁴ Brig Gen Kareem, Commander, New Al Muthana Air Base, discussions with author throughout 2005.

⁷⁵ Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War Volume 4: The Gulf War*, (Boulder, CO Westview Press, Inc, 1996), 24.

⁷⁶ Norvell B. De Atkine, “Why Arabs Lose Wars,” *Middle East Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (December 1999): 27.

⁷⁷ Redwood, interview.

Flight Engineer Responsibilities

In contrast to the United States, Squadron 23 had both officers and enlisted flight engineers. The first group consisted of one officer, who quit the program after four months, and three warrant officers. A second group of four officers was slated to arrive in June. Previously, Iraqi flight engineers simply ensured switches were in the correct position to allow the pilot to start the engines, run the fuel, and fly the aircraft. Thus, the pilot was the aircraft system expert and the flight engineer was relegated to flipping switches. In the United States, the pilot has a good understanding of aircraft systems and performance data, but the flight engineer is the expert and responsible for having an in-depth knowledge of both.

For training, the AST flight engineers made the decision to align Iraqi aircrew responsibilities with US standards. Therefore, Iraqi engineers were instructed to be the C-130 aircraft system experts and assist the pilot in troubleshooting system malfunctions. In an emergency, the pilot needed to have confidence in the flight engineer's expertise to help determine a proper course of action, especially since they were also being trained to the US standard of relying on the flight engineer as the aircraft system's expert.

For performance data, the flight engineers needed to know how to get outside air temperature, airfield attitude, pressure altitude, airfield length, aircraft weight, load weight and so forth to determine various aircraft speeds, distances, and capabilities. Accurate performance data is absolutely essential to safe aircraft operations and a miscalculation could be fatal in extreme cases. Squadron 23's mission of flying senior Iraqi officials across the Middle East and Europe made it even more critical for flight engineers to understand how to calculate and interpret performance data across a wide range of conditions.

Flight Engineer Training Woes

The Iraq flight engineers received extensive training prior to the AST arrival. Previous training included three months of C-130 aircraft systems and flight training in Jordan and two weeks of aircraft systems training, flight simulators, and a flight at Little Rock Air Force Base in the United States. Still, the AST had to start over from the beginning after warrant officers knowledge indicated they had retained very little from this initial training. The AST flight engineers instituted a program of intensive one-on-one instruction in aircraft systems and performance data as well as in-flight instruction two to three times per week.

After 10-months of training, the warrant officers still had significant difficulty or were incapable of learning the material, retaining the information, or consistently performing in the aircraft. In comparison, officers from the second group were becoming fully qualified after a mere four-months of training. The AST flight engineers were concerned language might be the reason warrant officers were not advancing and began using Iraqi officers from the second group to train and instruct the struggling warrant officers. Using this method, they were able to qualify one warrant officer after more than a year of training; however, the other two still failed to progress and were eventually removed from flight engineer training.

At this point, the AST considered two options. They could revert to the previous Iraqi standard and require the pilot to become the aircraft system's expert or limit flight engineer duties to officers only. The first option would allow the flight engineers to revert to simply flipping switches and most likely lead to a higher number of warrant officers qualifying for the position. The strongest argument against this option was the complexity of the C-130 as compared to previous Antonov aircraft in the Iraqi inventory. The C-130 has multiple and redundant systems especially when looking at hydraulics and electrics. In comparison, the

C-130 has three hydraulic systems compared to one generally found on Antonov and Ilyushin aircraft.

This additional complexity and number of systems increased the amount of information a C-130 system's expert had to retain and led the AST to conclude that it was unrealistic to expect a pilot to be the expert in flying the aircraft, knowing aircraft systems, and calculating the performance data. As a result, they settled on the second option of accepting only officers as C-130 flight engineers. This would allow the division of responsibilities and Iraqi officers had proven themselves capable of assuming flight engineers duties. Subsequently, the AST forwarded a recommendation the IqAF HHQ to assign only officers to future C-130 flight engineer positions.

Iraqi Maintenance Supervisors

After reviewing previous Iraqi officer and warrant officer roles, the high number of officers assigned to maintenance, and potential difficulty of putting warrant officers in leadership positions, the AST maintenance officer decided not to align warrant officers with traditional NCO maintenance positions. He was concerned warrant officers would be incapable of supervising flight line operations, directing personnel actions, setting timelines, approving airworthiness of the aircraft, or ensuring work was completed according to standards.⁷⁸ Therefore, he assigned officers to all production supervisor and quality assurance positions in addition to putting an officer in charge of supply and air transportation.

In a recent interview, the AST maintenance officer assessed that he had made the right decision.⁷⁹ He pointed to the problems in operations with flight engineers and his observation of

⁷⁸ Maj Gerald McCray, AST Maintenance Officer Jan 05–Feb 06, interview by author, 12 March 2007.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

warrant officers performance throughout the year. The warrant officers in maintenance repeatedly demonstrated a lack of desire to take charge, make decisions, or direct the work of others.⁸⁰ Additionally, the fact warrant officers often refused to follow directions from officers made the likelihood of following orders from another warrant officer highly unlikely.

In his assessment, warrant officer capabilities and Iraqi military culture would need to change before they could effectively assume leadership positions.⁸¹ The Iraqi chief of maintenance agreed with the assertion that warrant officers were unfit for leadership positions and doubted they would ever effectively carry out leadership responsibilities in the squadron.⁸² This attitude is just one more indication of the difficult task advisors will face in transitioning more responsibility to warrant officers in the IqAF.

Lessons Learned

A lack of education, professionalization, or leadership roles has produced a warrant officer force incapable of assuming many of the duties assigned to senior enlisted personnel in the United States. First, advisors should expect warrant officers to possess a high school equivalent education at best. Second, their education relied heavily on rote memorization and imitation and the majority are unprepared or incapable of the consistent critical thinking required to troubleshoot complex operational or maintenance problems. Consequently, advisors cannot simply align warrant officers and senior enlisted positions in the United States and expect the same results.

The lack of professional education or previous leadership experience has further created a warrant officer force with little understanding or motivation to take responsibility or initiative.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

More importantly, the lack of previous experience or education has left many incapable of assuming leadership responsibilities. A strong military tradition of using junior officers in technical leadership positions has also limited warrant officer technical competency. As a result, junior officers are best prepared to assume current technical leadership positions until such time as warrant officers are properly selected, educated, and trained to assume leadership roles in technical fields.

In the end, the C-130 experience indicates advisors are going to have a difficult time overcoming a lack of desire among warrant officers to assume greater leadership roles and lack of confidence by Iraqi officers that warrant officers are capable of assuming greater leadership roles. There is no appreciation for the potential benefits of a strong warrant officer force and any effort to transition warrant officers to leadership positions will be a slow process, require education across the entire force, and motivation of future warrant officer leaders.

Reduced Training Days

Iraqi aircrew and maintenance qualification timelines and continuity were dependent on the number of available training days. The paper has already discussed the allocation of 50 percent of all training time to English. This section will address the shrinking number of training days due to reduced training schedules coupled with liberal leave and personnel absent without leave (AWOL). A discussion of potential Iraqi justifications for the reduced schedule is also included to educate future advisors of Iraqi concerns and justifications of the problem.

Even before training started there were differences in work schedule expectations. The US military in almost every instance is likely perceived by foreign forces as working too hard

⁸² Shamel, interview.

and too long. In Iraq, the situation was exaggerated even more as the advisors were deployed to a combat zone, had few distractions, and were ready to work seven days a week. On the other hand, Iraqi airmen had many competing demands and a difficult time overcoming the impact of war and insurgent activity on completing the simplest task.

During the training period, the Iraqis lived with the AST in tent city and only returned home during their off-days. For work schedules, the Iraqi Army had an established training standard of 21-days on and 7-days off. After a few weeks, the AST adopted this same standard and associated training timelines. From the beginning, the Iraqis believed the 21 and 7 schedule was too much and by the end of the first year, the maintenance schedule was eventually reduced to 10-days on and 5-days off. The operations personnel, who were mostly qualified and only required to keep a minimum number of personnel from each crew position available, were working even less with an 11-days on and 11-days off schedule at best. Moreover, Squadron 23 observation of all Muslim and Iraqi holidays reduced available training days even more.

The problem of reduced training days was compounded even further by individuals on leave or AWOL. The press is full of stories describing how the new Iraqi Army is plagued with reduced manning levels, liberal leave policies, or personnel simply not reporting for work.⁸³ A Center of Naval Analysis report cited,

“The average Iraqi soldier takes over 100 days of leave per year. Although he must do so in order to provide for his family, these absences reduce combat strength and often result in soldiers going AWOL...As a result, the number of soldiers present for duty is at least 25 percent lower than reported strength.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Michael R. Gordon, “News Analysis: Iraq Army Quandary,” *The New York Times*, 24 October 2006, 1.

⁸⁴ Henry J. Kenny, *Strengthening an Embattled Nation: A Strategy for Contending with Three Wars in Iraq*, The Center for Naval Analyses Report (Monterey CA, December 2006) 6. The last sentence is cited in the report as coming from Greg Jaffe, “Problems Afflict U.S. Army Program to Advise Iraqis,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 18, 2006. The source for the Wall Street journal article is listed as “U.S. military officials.”

Thus, it is not surprising Squadron 23 suffered from the same affliction. Individuals missing training days became so rampant the AST maintenance officer produced a five-month report documenting the extent of the problem. The report covered maintenance personnel only, but provides a snapshot into the overall problem and is indicative of the entire training period. From 6 June to 18 November 2005 maintenance personnel were AWOL 217 days, granted 614 training days of additional leave, and missed another 182 days for meetings at HHQ.⁸⁵ In the final summary, Iraqi maintenance personnel missed 1,013 of 7,070 available training days or a total of 14 percent of all training. The missed training days ranged from returning to work a day late to missing entire 10 to 15-day work periods.⁸⁶ Missing a 10 to 15 day work period equates to 20 to 25 days of training unavailability when off-days are considered. It is difficult to progress in English or technical training when students are missing almost a month of training at a time.

The missing students also had a ripple effect on the other students in their aviation specialty. Upon a student's return, the instructor had to secure one of the limited interpreters to conduct one-on-one instruction. Since interpreter availability was limited to aviation specialty class time, one-on-one instruction was often done at the expense of the overall class; after-hours instruction was generally not an option as local interpreters had to return home before dark. Ultimately, it was not an either or choice and resulted in absent students lagging behind and slower overall class progression.

Causes and Justifications

The following discussion on potential causes and justifications stems from AST opinions and numerous author discussions with the squadron and base commander regarding this issue.

⁸⁵ McCray, interview.

⁸⁶ Coalition Air Force Transition Team Situation Report, 28 November 2005.

Some AST personnel believed Iraqis were simply unwilling to work and wanted to stay home with their families. While families are important in Arab culture, they perceived laziness as the motivating factor.

A review of Arab culture does find some experts asserting the fatalistic view of everything being God's will does lead to a work ethic that many Westerners find disconcerting.

Sania Hamady in *Temperament and Character of the Arabs* provides the following:

“It is simply a matter of fact that this idea of the omnipresence of divine action, besides making the Muslim peculiarly inclined to refer events to God, has tended to make him inert. If one has been lazy and negligent, it is always consoling to think that it was so ordained and could not be helped.”⁸⁷

Patai comes to a similar conclusion in his book *The Arab Mind* stating, “Fatalism engenders an attitude of passivity and the disinclination to undertake efforts to change or improve things.”⁸⁸

On the other hand, Halim Barakat in *The Arab World* argues against Hamady's and Patai's conclusion and cites numerous passages regarding free will from the Quran and Arab proverbs. Consequently, he rejects any assertion that Arabs are lazy or that there is any connection to fatalism.⁸⁹ Kenneth Pollack found so many conflicting views on whether fatalism led to apathy or laziness in his research that he chose not to include it as a cultural trait in his discussion of Arab culture's impact on military effectiveness.⁹⁰ Given the disagreement between experts, this author can draw no definitive conclusions of a cultural bias, but laziness was a perception held by many after working with the Iraqis.

From the Iraqi perspective, the reduced training schedule was justified by many other factors. The first justification evolved from differing perceptions on the urgency of training

⁸⁷ Sania Hamady, *Temperament and Character of the Arabs*, (New York, NY: Twayne Publishers, 1960) 213.

⁸⁸ Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind*, (New York, NY: Columbia Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976) 153.

⁸⁹ Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State*, (Berkley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1993) 191-194.

⁹⁰ Pollack, *The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness*, 46-47.

timelines and the importance of the mission. The IqAF HHQ never established a target date for full qualification of Squadron 23 personnel. From Squadron 23's point of view, the pace of training should be similar to the Monday-Friday training schedule of a student in the United States versus the 21 and 7 schedule they were following. This attitude was only reinforced by the five-day work schedule at the IqAF HHQs despite the on-going insurgent activity.

When the AST tried to argue the merits of the mission, the Iraqis were unconvinced their mission contributed to stability in Iraq. Furthermore, their qualifications were not impacting the level of C-130 support to Iraqi forces. A quicker qualification would only reduce the number of AST personnel on the crew and conducting maintenance, it would not increase the number of available C-130 missions to support Iraqi requests. Thus, the arrangement of US personnel flying and maintaining Iraqi aircraft created its own disincentive for quicker Iraqi qualifications.

Family responsibilities also provided a strong incentive for increased off-time. The advanced age of squadron members equated to large family obligations back home. If a brother was killed, members had the additional burden of taking care of his family as well. The fact that some warrant officer had more than one wife further complicated family responsibilities. Furthermore, when Iraqi airmen proclaimed they were needed at home to make decisions or things would not get done; there was at least some cultural truth behind their claims. Finally, the insurgency as explained below increased the complexity and time requirements of existing family responsibilities as well.

In a peaceful Arab society, the father would accomplish almost all of the duties outside the home. In Baghdad where the majority of the squadron lived, indiscriminate bombing and high crime rates complicated the accomplishment of even simple duties. The banking system had collapsed, bills had to be paid in person, and members had to wait in long lines for fuel to

heat homes, run generators, and power vehicles. Even food shopping was treacherous as markets were a favorite target of insurgents. Because of the chaos, fathers were more reticent to pass these duties to older sons and most family members choose to simply stay at home. Once again, things simply did not get done unless squadron members were home and able to accomplish these tasks.

The AST had little understanding of a failed banking system and inability to handle things through checks and the mail. Ironically, most AST members were paying their bills from Iraq though electronic banking and automatic billing. For Iraqis to even get paid, they had to go the HHQ in Baghdad, receive their salaries in cash, and hand deliver it to their families. What might take an US airman minutes to accomplish could take an Iraqi airmen an entire day. In this environment, nothing was easy, everything took time, and their advanced age only increased responsibilities. Consequently, the Iraqis continually insisted on more time at home to get things done and the AST, having little understanding of the realities in Baghdad, often deferred to their judgment.

In more candid discussions, Iraqis also pointed to the lack of a merit-based system as encouraging less time at work. The IqAF of the past and present was not a meritocracy and military promotions and positions were often based on family or tribal ties. This is not an anomaly in the Arab world and generally accepted as standard practice within the military. The influence of family ties was evident when a new navigator, whose father was an influential Sheik in Baghdad, was promoted from major to colonel after only a few days in the squadron and designated the Deputy Base Commander. The fact everyone was already at their highest rank further reduced the motivation to work harder or longer hours.

All of these factors contributed to Iraqi efforts to reduce training days and extend training timelines. The discussion above provides some of the expressed motivations for the reduced schedules, but only the Iraqis know the real reasons and it likely varied from individual to individual. For the AST, training days were being reduced and neither the Iraqi squadron leadership nor HHQ showed any concern over the slow progress or lengthening US commitment.

Lessons Learned

The challenges of reduced training days were many and produced multiple lessons learned. First, training schedules and benchmarks must be set and agreed to by the United States and IqAF HHQ prior to initiating any training. Ideally, the Iraqi leadership has the best understanding of everyday life and should set training schedules to meet agreed upon timelines. Second, advisors must work with HHQ to limit leave during training periods. Third, Iraqi leadership must hold its own personnel accountable to prevent a few individuals from impacting the progress of the entire missions. An established training schedule with minimal interruptions enables both countries to measure progress and prevents extended commitments of US advisors and trainers.

On the other hand, advisors must understand the operating and living environment in Iraq and the fact that competing demands may lead to reduced schedules. This realities makes it that much more important to work with the Iraqis to strike a balance between effective use of deployed advisor time and Iraqi requirements. As the paper begins to discuss CAFTT plans to build Iraqi airpower, the training schedule should be a joint decision, decided early, and only change due to mission factors.

Chapter 4

IRAQ AIRPOWER

The previous two chapters discussed initial C-130 advisor efforts in Iraq. This chapter transitions to a recent CENTAF proposals and Air Force planning efforts to rapidly develop Iraqi airpower over the next two years. Specifically, this section will provide a general overview of the proposed increases in IqAF personnel, aircraft, and advisors and a more detailed discussion of pre-deployment advisor training, establishment of a flying training squadron, and technical training pipelines. While efforts to develop Iraqi airpower are still evolving, this discussion is limited to actions proposed prior to 8 March 2007.

Building Airpower in Iraq

Since its inception in November 2005, the Coalition Air Force Transition Team has spearheaded and managed several initiatives to improve IqAF operations. Over the past two years, it has increased in size to 115 personnel and provided assistance across IqAF HHQ staff, operations, and training.⁹¹ This pace of measured growth will explode over the next two years as CAFTT implements a plan to rapidly build IqAF capacity and capability.

⁹¹ Maj Andrew J. Radke, Personnel/Manpower, Coalition Air Force Transition Team Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, to author, email, 21 January 2007.

In January 2007, the CAFTT commanding general presented his commander's intent to a Headquarters Air Force IPT led by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs,

“Introduce and sustain western influence in the Iraqi Air Force through a combination of training, advising, and mentoring both in and out of the country. Build an Objective Force capable of conducting air operations across the entire spectrum of the COIN fight with a sustainable force structure while laying a solid foundation for future IqAF growth.”⁹²

A comprehensive plan of impressive IqAF growth to meet the commander's intent was also presented to the IPT. Briefly, CAFTT projects the IqAF will grow over the next two years from approximately 1,000 to well over 3,000 personnel in an effort to reach its authorized strength of 4,000.⁹³ During the same timeframe, the Iraqi aircraft fleet will grow from 27 to 89 total aircraft.⁹⁴

Table 6 Planned Iraqi Aircraft Growth⁹⁵

| Aircraft | Current | Planned |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| C-130 | 3 | 6 |
| Seeker | 2 | 2 |
| Ch 2000 | 8 | 8 |
| Cessna 208 | 0 | 8 |
| King Air 350 | 0 | 4 |
| Cessna 172 | 0 | 12 |
| Jet Ranger | 5 | 5 |
| Huey II | 5 | 16 |
| Mi 17 | 4 | 28 |
| Total | 27 | 89 |

Source: Brig Gen Stephen L. Hoog, Commanding General, Coalition Air Force Transition Team, Briefing “Coalition Air Force Transition Team” (FOUO) slide 6.

⁹² Col Sharon L. Holmes, Chief, Middle East/Africa Division, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs, memorandum of record, 26 January 2007, 1.

⁹³ Hoog, Coalition Air Force Transition Team CAFTT, (FOUO) slide 5.

⁹⁴ Ibid, (FOUO) slide 6.

⁹⁵ Ibid, (FOUO) slide 6.

The potential for even greater growth exists as the Iraq Minister of Defense considers the acquisition of 8 AT-6s or Tucanos and an additional 42 Huey IIs the US Army recently declared excess.⁹⁶

The acquisition of additional aircraft is part of CAFTT's overall plan to augment and establish Objective Force capabilities in six areas:

1. "Fixed Wing Airlift: Ability to perform operational and tactical air mobility operations to include personnel and cargo movement in Iraq and around the region.
 - Possess: 3 x C-130s; Planned: 3 x C-130s.
2. Battlefield Mobility: Ability to conduct full range of rotary wing combat, combat support, and medical evacuation support operations safely and integrated into coalition operations.
 - Possess: 5 Huey II & 4 Mi-17s; Planned: 5 Huey II & 16 Mi-17s; Possible: 24 Huey IIs.
3. Surveillance and Reconnaissance: Ability to collect and disseminate airborne intelligence day and night with goal of 75-100 hours of full-motion video per day across Iraq.
 - Possess: 8 x Ch-2000 & 2 x Seekers; Planned: 3 x Caravan & 3 King Air 350 ER.
4. Counter Terrorism (CT): Ability to identify, fix, track, target, and engage emergent and time-sensitive targets supporting Iraqi ground forces and special operations. Provide battlefield mobility to special operations force, command and control monitoring and over watch, and limited precision fore support as needed.
 - Possess: None; Planned: 8 x Mi-17s & 3 Caravans (armed with Hellfire missiles); Possible: 8 x Huey IIs (armed with machine guns and 2.75 rockets).
5. Counter Insurgency (COIN): Ability for long loiter, common surveillance and reconnaissance data and imagery capabilities, and limited precision fire support.
 - Possess: None; Planned: None; Possible: 8 x AT-6s or Tucanos (armed with Hellfire missiles, bombs, and 2.75 rockets).
6. Fixed Wing & Rotary Wing Flight Training: Ability to conduct flight training in both platforms with capability to graduate 100 pilots per year.

⁹⁶ Ibid, (FOUO) slide 6-8.

- Possess: 5 x Jet Ranger; Planned: 12 x Cessna 172s, 5 x Caravans, & 8 Huey IIs.”⁹⁷

The first three capabilities currently exist in the IqAF with the new aircraft either augmenting the current capability or representing an improvement in the existing capability. The next three capabilities are new mission areas CAFTT will help the IqAF establish over the next two years. The seventh Objective Force capability of Airspace Command and Control does not involve aircraft acquisition, but is essential to enabling the IqAF and Iraq’s Civil Aviation Authority to control air operations and air traffic throughout Iraq’s sovereign airspace.⁹⁸ In establishing a capability in these seven areas CAFTT will enable the IqAF to support and contribute to on-going operations in Iraq.

In order to provide effective assistance at this critical juncture, CAFTT is also recommending a 300 percent increase in Air Force advisors.⁹⁹ CAFTT is already in the process of increasing the number of advisors to 200 by May 2007 and has a final goal of 451 by May 2008. The primary growth occurs in the new mission areas of flying training, technical training, COIN, CAS, and the Air Operations Center. CAFTT staff and strategic advisors are also increased to provide improved oversight and HHQ assistance.

In harnessing expertise and support from Headquarters Air Force and the other major commands, the IPT organized into separate teams focused in five areas: CONUS training, theater training, forces planning, acquisition strategy, and programming. For discussion purposes, this paper will focus on the CONUS and theater training initiatives as directly related to aviation advisor operations and most applicable to the previous C-130 mission discussion. The CONUS training team focused on designing pre-deployment advisor training as a critical aspect of

⁹⁷ Hoog, Coalition Air Force Transition Team CAFTT, (FOUO) slides 7-12.

⁹⁸ Ibid, (FOUO) slide 13.

preparing general purpose advisors for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The theater training group focused on establishing the flying training capability and training pipelines to prepare Iraqi officers and warrants for required specialties. By focusing in these areas, the paper presents issues and recommendations which are applicable to the entire CAFTT proposal.

Advisor Pre-Deployment Training

Pre-deployment training has been an issue since C-130 AST training was limited to an abbreviated Middle East Orientation Course in early 2005. A full discussion of the evolution in pre-deployment training was reserved for this section to provide a comprehensive discussion of the growth in the program and proposed way ahead.

Initial Pre-Deployment Training

In addition to its previous findings, the CENTAF operational assessment team identified the lack of a dedicated pre-deployment training program for general purpose forces as limiting Air Force advisor success in Iraq. Once established, CAFTT assumed ownership of the pre-deployment training process and coordinated with CENTAF, USAFSOS, and Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) to develop a more robust and effective program.

The initial collaboration produced a 31-day course that paralleled the 45-day training course Army Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) received at Fort Riley, Kansas.¹⁰⁰ The course encompassed mission essential training tasks focused in three areas:

⁹⁹ Bruce Lemkin, Deputy Under Secretary Air Force International Affairs, Briefing, "Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report," 8 March 2007, slide 22.

¹⁰⁰ Staff Summary Sheet, Lt Col Wesley W. Long, Director, Chief, Offensive Operations, 609th Combat Operations Squadron, "USCENTAF Aviation Military Transition Team (MITT) Academic Course Support Request," 21 September 2007.

“Mission: CENTAF/MNSTC-I/CAFTT Command and Control and mission, IqAF organization; coalition air/ground operations; mission planning, combat aviation advisory operations; counterinsurgency theory; military decision making process; security assistance process; MiTT lessons learned.

Cultural: Arabic Language Familiarization; Iraqi culture to include the Iraqi view of Iraq and the Iraqi view of the US/Coalition.

Combat Skills: DOD force protection level I; AK-47 familiarization; CENTCOM high risk of capture/isolation, level-C SERE; forward operating base operations; convoy procedures; shoot and move procedures.”¹⁰¹

While USAFSOS and DLI were responsible for the cultural training tasks, CAFTT, AFSOC, and 6th SOS assumed the lead in the mission and combat skills training blocks. The actual course was conducted from 9 July to 19 August 2006 and hosted approximately 100 of the 115 advisors scheduled to deploy to Iraq in late 2006. Overall, the program was a huge improvement, but few programs get it 100 percent right the first time.

The following feedback comes from an informal survey taken by the CAFTT chief of training and formal interviews by the author.¹⁰² The USAFSOS’s Middle East Orientation, Contemporary Insurgents Warfare (CIWC), and Dynamics of Terrorism (DIT) courses were all included in the pre-deployment training. The DIT course was specifically scheduled and tailored for Iraq advisor training. Conversely, MEOC and CIWC were previously scheduled USAFSOS curriculum courses containing students not involved in the advisor mission, which USAFSOS opened up to the US advisors headed to Iraq.

In feedback, MEOC and DIT were both well received and considered very informative and applicable to the mission. In contrast, CIWC, taught last, received less favorable comments due to the level of repetition from the previous two courses and a perceived lack of applicability

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² The areas of concern and feedback come from two general sources. Col Gary W. Kirk, Iraq A-7 Training Advisor, Coalition Air Force Transition Team, interview by author, 5 January 2007. Second, individual feedback through interviews with six other C-130 Military Transition Team individuals who attended the training.

to the Air Force advisor mission. Repetition is the unavoidable by-product of a non-dedicated course and something CAFTT should consider in the future. In regards to applicability, a survey of advisors at their mid-tour point should provide a more accurate measure of CWIC applicability to advisor operations. However, it is important for Air Force advisors to understand the insurgent and counterinsurgency strategies being employed in Iraq in order to advise the IqAF on how best to support these operations.

The DLI Arabic Language Familiarization Course taught over five half-days also received mixed reviews. Most advisors believed the course provided good information on general greetings and numbers, but could be relayed through handouts versus dedicated class time.¹⁰³ While language is an important aspect of training foreign forces, pre-deployment training is simply too late to impart any meaningful level of Arabic language training. This is one obstacle just-in-time training cannot overcome.

In regards to mission briefings, the information imparted was found to be informative and applicable, but a more experienced presenter and broader advisor representation would improve the overall course. The majority of the briefings were provided by a single individual very familiar with the overall program, but limited experience as an actual IqAF advisor. Moreover, advisors believed representatives with experience in operations, maintenance, base operating support, and technical training would provide a broader perspective and clearer expectations of the issues in each area. Furthermore, breakout sessions could focus the discussion on specific issues and concerns for each specialty.

The combat skills training provided by 6th SOS was very intense and structured towards their special operations type missions. Typically, they deploy as a self-sufficient small group to

¹⁰³ Col Gary W. Kirk, Iraq A-7 Training Advisor, Coalition Air Force Transition Team, interview by author, 5 January 2007.

a foreign country and are responsible for their own security and protection. In contrast, Iraq aviation advisors are based on Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) with robust layers of security for which advisors are not responsible. Unlike Army advisors, Air Force advisors are not interacting with the Iraqi population or exposed to many of the same dangers. Consequently, much of the shoot, move, and communicate training was not applicable to their specific environment. Some personnel found the weapons and convoy training beneficial and a more in-depth review and feedback from personnel in the field is necessary to draw final conclusions on the applicability of each training module. CAFTT understood this was a first effort and is continually refining its training and preparation of advisors.

Proposed Pre-deployment Training

The potential growth of Iraq advisors validated the need for a permanent solution for pre-deployment advisor training. Additionally, CENTAF completed an operational assessment of Afghanistan, found similar deficiencies, and proposed a similar plan to increase Afghanistan advisors to 150 personnel over the next two years.¹⁰⁴ As a result, the IPT was tasked to design a pre-deployment training program capable of providing training for approximately 600 advisors a year.

To meet this requirement, the IPT approved a four-tier concept managed by an AETC detachment, which leverages the Common Battlefield Airmen Training (CBAT) initiative with additional air advisor and aircraft familiarization training.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ North, Building Airpower in Iraq and Afghanistan, (FOUO) slide 11.

¹⁰⁵ Lemkin, Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, slide 9.

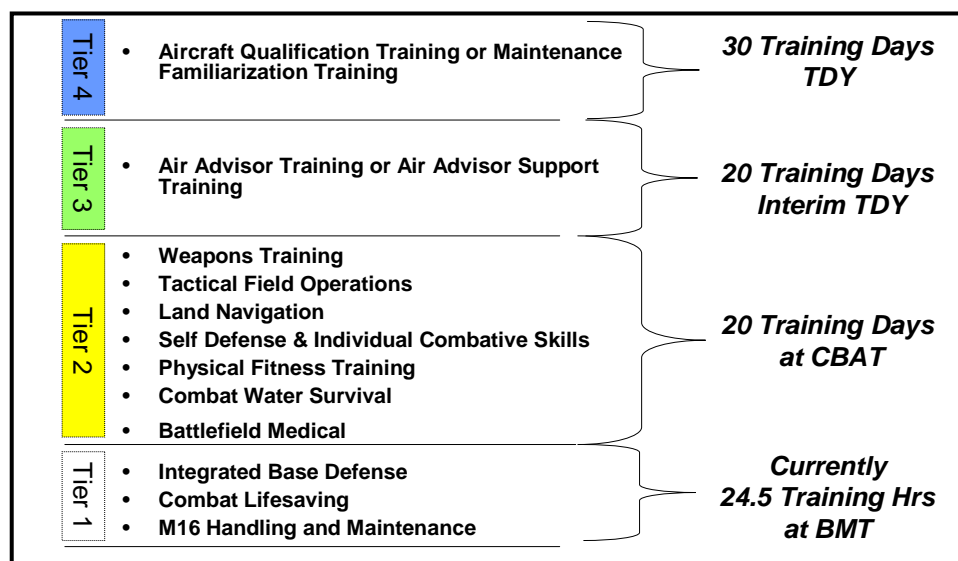


Figure 2 Proposed Advisor Training Program¹⁰⁶

The Tier 1 Basic Military Training (BMT) is included only to indicate airmen graduating after November 2006 may have already received instruction in some of the combat skills areas required for advisor billets.¹⁰⁷ Advisors would not attend portions of BMT for combat skills training.

Tier 2 provides combat skills training at CBAT. CBAT is an evolving initiative first introduced by then Secretary of the Air Force James Roche in 2004 to establish a dedicated training center for conducting common combat skills training for all Battlefield Airmen.¹⁰⁸ Today, the initiative is focused away from Battlefield Airmen and towards career fields not traditionally taught combat skills, but are now in need of these skills due to deployments into hostile environments. The most obvious example is transportation specialists receiving training at the Basic Combat Convoy Course in preparation for convoy duties in Iraq. Traditionally, these airmen drove forklifts and trucks inside the wire, but more and more, are being called upon

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, slide 9.

¹⁰⁷ CMSgt Steve Sargent, United States Air Force Basic Military Training Superintendent, discussion with author, 16 March 2007.

¹⁰⁸ David A. Jablonski, "Secretary reveals future systems at AFA symposium" *Air Force Print News*, 13 February 2004, <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123006983>.

to operate outside the wire in support of combat operations and need combat skills to accomplish their missions.¹⁰⁹

Currently, AETC is looking to establish the training center in Tennessee, Georgia, or Louisiana and coordinating with Headquarters Air Force on who should attend the combat skills training courses.¹¹⁰ In addition to combat skills training for personnel tasked to hostile areas, personnel selected for certain career fields will proceed from BMT to CBAT before entering specialty training. CBAT is expected to be fully operational in 2010 with a throughput of over 14,000 students a year.¹¹¹ In the meantime, a bridge course is under development to meet current requirements. Ultimately, CBAT will institutionalize Air Force combat training at a single location and instill a combat ethos in future airmen operating on the battlefield.

The IPT designed pre-deployment plan inserts advisors into applicable CBAT courses as part of their combat skills training. Under this plan, Air Force advisors would receive applicable battlefield training in courses designed to impart similar skills to other specialties. The IPT asserted the use of CBAT will “minimize costs and training time by targeting the right people for the right training and eliminate the need to duplicate training programs that already exist.”¹¹²

For Tier 3 training, the AETC detachment will provide the necessary mission, culture, and combat skills training not included in the CBAT course, preferably at a co-located facility.¹¹³ Thus, the AETC detachment would assume responsibility for the culture and mission training previously led by USAFSOS and CAFTT. Similar to CBAT, Tier 3 training will be tailored to the specific requirements of each advisor billet.

¹⁰⁹ Donna Miles, “Air Force Provides Convoy Security for Army, Marines in Iraq” *American Forces Press Services*, 8 February 2005, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2005/n02082005_2005020801.html.

¹¹⁰ Lt Col John M. Bukowski, Chief, Technical Training Division, Air Education and Training Command, discussion with author, 15 March 2007.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Memorandum for AETC A2/3 from AETC/A3R/ AETC A3F, 2AF/DO, USAF BMT Superintendent, “Coalition Air Force Transition Team In-Country Visit” 26 February 2007, 6.

Tier 4 training will consist of familiarization training for advisors selected to train and advise Iraqi and Afghan personnel in aircraft not found in the USAF inventory. Clearly, the majority of Iraqi aircraft specified in the proposal do not exist in the USAF inventory and the Afghanistan Air Corp is currently flying AN-32s, AN-26s, Mi-17s, and MI-35s.¹¹⁴ The AETC detachment will manage contracts to provide both aircrew and maintenance familiarization training in required aircraft. The contracts and locations of the familiarization training are still under consideration.

Per the IPT overview slide, pre-deployment training time will vary according to advisor billet requirements, but could approximate 80-days for operations and maintenance advisors requiring familiarization training. Pre-deployment training time is an important consideration because it is in addition to the 365-day advisor tour. As advisors are coming from general purpose career fields, their pre-deployment training and one-year tours come at the expense of core specialty duties.

The establishment of the pre-deployment advisor training program came with a two-year 15 million dollars price tag, which the Air Force Chief of Staff approved release of Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) funding for 2007-2008.¹¹⁵ GWOT funding expires in 2008; therefore, AETC will work with Headquarters Air Force to insert 2009-2010 program costs with associated offsets into the Air Force Program Objective Memorandum.¹¹⁶ AETC will also begin developing courseware for the top-two tiers of training, coordinating with CAFTT to identify required

¹¹³ Lemkin, Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, slide 9.

¹¹⁴ Brig Gen Frank Padilla, Mobilization assistant to the commander, Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command, Briefing, "Afghanistan National Army Air Corps Assistance Team Outbrief," (FOUO) 16 November 2006, slide 13.

¹¹⁵ Lemkin, Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, slide 11.

¹¹⁶ Author's notes, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs Building Airpower in Iraq and Afghanistan IPT meeting, 1 March 2007.

training for each advisor billet, and finalizing facility and personnel requirements for the AETC detachment.

Alternative Pre-deployment Training Option

During the review process, the IPT also considered the establishment of an Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center, which would manage, tailor, and teach all required pre-deployment training requirements.¹¹⁷ The center would provide baseline training for all advisors in weapons qualification, convoy operations, combat lifesaving, cultural awareness, language skills, survival, contemporary insurgent warfare, combat aviation advisor fundamentals, and theater command and control.¹¹⁸ The center would also be responsible for providing aircraft and maintenance specific training for advisors tasked to train in non-USAF aircraft.¹¹⁹

In this option, the training center did not leverage or use another organization to teach any of its courses. The primary location under consideration was the Hurlburt Field area to take advantage of expertise at USAFSOS and 6th SOS. Initial rough order of magnitude estimates priced this option at 10 million dollars a year.¹²⁰ The higher price tag and duplication of combat skills courses already taught at CBAT made this option less attractive.¹²¹ A more detailed comparison of the two options is included in the recommendations section.

¹¹⁷ Col Phillip Senna, Air Education and Training Command A3R Briefing “CAFTT Pre-Deployment Training: Theater Training team Panel 29 Jan – 6 Feb 07,” slide 8.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, slide 5.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, slide 8.

¹²⁰ Author’s notes, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs Building Airpower in Iraq and Afghanistan IPT meeting, 1 March 2007.

¹²¹ AETC A2/3 to AETC/A3R, memorandum, 6.

Theater Training

With the pre-deployment training plan approved, it is time to look at training inside Iraq. Theater training is critical to building a foundation for future IqAF sustainment. The flying training squadron enables the production of new pilots to replace an existing pilot force in their mid-forties. CAFTT is also in the process of extensive training pipeline development, in what it calls the “critical path to IqAF self-sufficiency.”¹²² The technical and professional training pipelines are the foundation for creating young officers and developing leaders with technical expertise within the warrant officer force. Both initiatives are essential elements in Iraq’s ability to maintain growth and ensure a competent force in the future.

This section will discuss initial plans to establish a flight training squadron and then review proposed training pipelines for an Iraqi pilot candidate and warrant officer selected to assume a maintenance supervisor position.

Iraq Flight Training

CAFTT is moving forward with establishing fixed and rotary-wing flight schools with a combined graduation rate of 100 pilots per year.¹²³ Advisors will teach Iraqi instructor pilots how to conduct basic pilot training, ground training, documentation, evaluations, scheduling, and how to track progress. As the Iraqi instructor pilots become qualified, US advisors and Iraqi pilots will conduct joint training. When the squadron is sufficiently manned and experienced, the mission will be handed over to the Iraqis to sustain.

¹²² Hoog, Coalition Air Force Transition Team CAFTT, (FOUO) slide 21.

¹²³ AETC A2/3 to AETC/A3R, memorandum, 4.

The fixed-wing school will consists of training in Cessna 172 and 208 aircraft and the rotary-wing school will provide training in Jet Ranger and Huey II helicopters.¹²⁴ The US advisors will receive instructor training on these aircraft in the United States and then train selected Iraqi instructor pilots in-country at an Iraqi Flying Training Center.¹²⁵ Similar to Jordanian flight schools, instruction will be provided in English.¹²⁶ As a result, pilot candidates will filter through a training pipeline with English language training and begin flight training in late 2007.

Pilot Candidate Pipeline

A new recruit has two options to enter the IqAF and become a pilot candidate. The first option is to attend the Iraqi Military Academy Al-Rustamiyah (IMAR). IMAR is a joint military academy and attended by members from all three of Iraq's service branches. IMAR conducts all training in Arabic and last approximately 32-weeks.¹²⁷ Upon graduation, an Air Force officer attends an IqAF officer indoctrination course lasting 16-weeks. For the indoctrination course, the IPT proposed dedicating half the day to Air Force fundamentals and the other half to English language training.¹²⁸

A two-year university student has the option of entering the IqAF as a new recruit by attending the IqAF Officer Training School (OTS). It is taught in Arabic, lasts 16-weeks, and similar to the indoctrination course planned for a half-day of officer training and half-day of English language training.¹²⁹ Immediately following OTS or indoctrination training for IMAR

¹²⁴ Hoog, Coalition Air Force Transition Team CAFTT, (FOUO) slide 6.

¹²⁵ Col Michael Senna, Air Education and Training Command A3R Briefing, "IqAF Training School (IqAFTS) CONUS OCR Support Update," 24 January 2007, slides 41-42.

¹²⁶ Ibid, slide 41.

¹²⁷ Senna, IqAF Training School, slide 36.

¹²⁸ Ibid, slide 38.

¹²⁹ Ibid, slide 37.

graduates, both enter a 24-week full-time English language program. Upon achieving the designated English Language Test score of 75, the pilot candidate would proceed to Primary Flight Training.¹³⁰ The following figure provides a graphic depiction of the two separate tracts, number of training weeks, and various training modules.

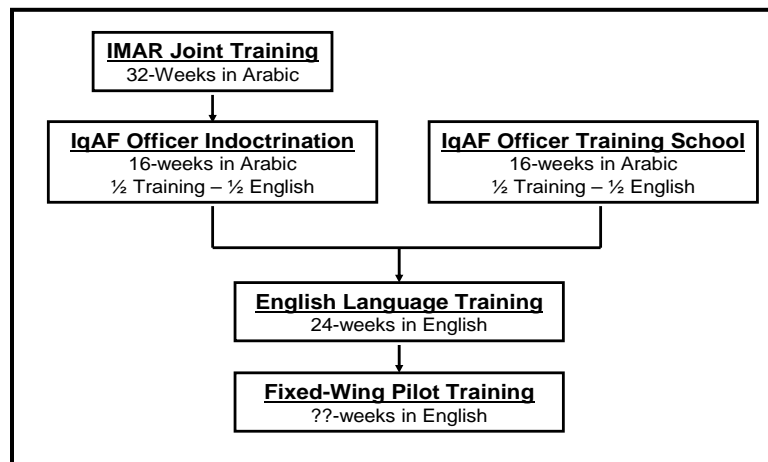


Figure 3 Iraqi Pilot Training Pipeline

The total number of weeks required for pilot training is still under consideration and discussed in greater detail in the recommendations portion of the paper.

Warrant Officer Maintenance Supervisor Pipeline

A warrant officer selected to become a maintenance supervisor for a unit with English-only TOs has a track similar to a pilot candidate.

¹³⁰ Hoog, Coalition Air Force Transition Team” (FOUO) slide 18.

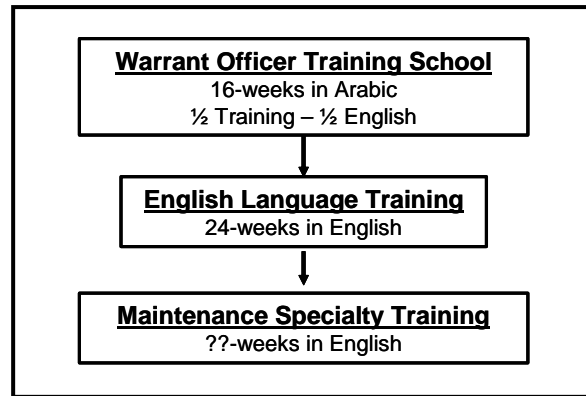


Figure 4 Maintenance Supervisor Pipeline

Currently, warrant officers assigned to the Warrant Officer Training School (WOTS) would attend class with junior officer going through OTS. Correspondingly, warrant officers would attend professional training for half the day and English language training the other half. Upon completion, warrant officers would attend the English language training for 24-weeks followed by more specific maintenance specialty training. After completing all three phases of training, the warrant officer would report to the unit for any unit specific training requirements.

In summary, the proposal to aggressively develop Iraqi airpower is underway. The IPT has selected a pre-deployment training program, received funding for the next two years, and selected AETC as the process owner. CAFTT is also setting the stage for fixed and rotary wing flying training inside Iraq and developing officer and enlisted training pipelines to prepare Iraqi personnel for future roles. As the programs get started, CAFTT must determine the necessary steps to ensure program success.

Chapter 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Iraq C-130 AST mission provides insights into advisor needs and presents lessons learned for the proposed development of Iraqi airpower. The Air Force must first prepare advisors for their mission and then prepare the Iraqi environment for effective training and advising operations. As public opinion and government commitment to Iraq waivers, the establishment of a flying training squadron and training pipelines are critical programs to enable Iraqi self-sufficiency and something the Air Force needs to get right the first time. This chapter will take lessons learned from the C-130 mission and pre-deployment training to present recommendations regarding the proposed advisor training and early steps CAFTT can take to ensure constructive establishment of the flying training squadron. The chapter concludes with recommendations on refining the pilot candidate and warrant officer pipelines for best results.

Pre-Deployment Training

CAFTT and CENTAF have built a solid foundation for pre-deployment training and turned to the Air Force for a permanent solution. The Air Force IPT recommended an AETC detachment co-located with the CBAT facility to provide tailored pre-deployment training for

future advisors. The new program provides a single AETC process owner to manage and coordinate advisor pre-deployment training and properly eliminates the requirement from the war fighter.

A single AETC process owner focused solely on advisor training provides many benefits. First, course managers and instructors have the singular responsibility of developing advisor training for Iraq or Afghanistan. Second, instructors focused solely on advisor missions are more likely to demand immediate feedback, make improvements to the courses, and pursue mid-tour feedback from advisors in the field. Third, their narrow focus will enable them to stay in contact with personnel in each country and adjust curriculum to changing conditions on the ground. Finally, constant contact with theater advisors will help them to identify the right personnel with pertinent experience to invite back as speakers for follow-on advisor training.

For personnel, the Air Force should fill the AETC detachment with personnel completing advisors tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. This will ensure resident expertise and credibility within the training facility. Ideally, follow-on instructors or program managers should be identified prior to even deploying for their advisor tours. Knowledge of a follow-on assignment to the advisor training center will enable them to glean as much information as possible during their tours and bring an informed perspective back to the detachment.

For training, the previous CAFTT program and proposed courses listed with each proposal are an outstanding start and a dedicated facility will be able to further refine course content and selection. Current feedback clearly indicates a language course simply consumes valuable pre-deployment training time and handouts of common greetings and specific military phrases are sufficient. A final recommendation is to include a cross cultural communication course in the training. The current curriculum provides a good understanding of Iraq and

Afghanistan culture, but an understanding of US culture is just as important. A cross culture communication course enlightens advisors on potential biases they bring to the mission and helps them to recognize why they perceive things a certain way and how to avoid mirror imaging. Advisor success is predicated on understanding the foreign force, but it is important they understand themselves as well.¹³¹

Take Another Look

Overall, the IPT program addresses the mission, culture, and combat skills requirements for advisor training. It also provides economies of scale and minimizes some costs through the use of CBAT combat skills courses. However, using CBAT courses limits the ability to tailor combat skills training, sacrifices flexibility, increases overall training time, and focuses synergy in the wrong area.

By using CBAT, AETC eliminated the expense of developing duplicate combat skills courses, but limited their ability to tailor courses to advisor requirements. Using convoy training as an example, advisors spend the vast majority of their time on FOBs with robust security. At times, they may need to ride in a convoy, but it is doubtful they will be responsible for organizing, driving, or protecting the convoy. Consequently, advisors need some familiarity with convoy operations, but the new program sacrifices the ability to tailor the CBAT convoy course to meet advisor-only requirements.

Course scheduling could also become a problem. In the extreme, an advisor could require only two CBAT courses taught on day 1 and day 20 of training, necessitating a 20-day TDY for two courses. The AETC detachment could fill the free time with air advisor courses, but they lose some flexibility in course scheduling and length of training. As discussed, the

¹³¹ Col Maxie MacFarland, "Military Culture Education," *Military Review* (March-April 2005) 64.

AETC detachment must consider minimizing the pre-deployment training time to maximize availability for home station duties.

Most importantly, co-locating the advisor training with CBAT leverages combat skills training, but fails to build synergy in the important culture and mission areas. While combat skills training can enhance advisor awareness and ability to survive, it does little to prepare general purpose aviation advisors for the challenges and responsibilities of advising Iraq and Afghanistan aviation forces. For long-term effectiveness, the Air Force should consider mission and cultural training as directly impacting advisor success and the most important aspects of pre-deployment training.

In this vain, the alternative option of building an Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center, especially in the Hurlburt Field area, is more appropriate and offers many benefits. Specifically, Hurlburt Field contains the 6th SOS with its combat aviation advisors and USAFSOS with its curriculum addressing many of the cultural and theater needs of advisor operations. A permanent training facility would certainly benefit from the resident expertise at both organizations. Synergy comes from the availability of local experts and ability of advisor training center instructors and course managers to audit training at these organizations and adapt best practices to their own mission. Each facility could also benefit from increased access to invited experts to other organizations. In this alternative, the training center would be co-located at the epicenter of advisor operations and could play an important role in preparing advisors for their missions and assisting combat aviation advisor growth.

A Hurlburt Field location also benefits from economies of scale in its aircraft operations and maintenance familiarization training. Afghanistan and Iraq both fly Mi-17 helicopters and the Afghanistan Air Corp is still using AN-32s for Presidential support. Both of these aircraft

are currently maintained through contracts with 6th SOS and located at Hurlburt Field. While they are needed for 6th SOS training, there are potential costs saving of contracting for access to existing aircraft or additional aircraft at a location where the aircraft already exist. 6th SOS could also benefit from reciprocal access to other aircraft types contracted for Iraq and Afghanistan advisor familiarization training. This would increase their exposure to foreign and commercial aircraft and create economies of scale with multiple users of a single contract.

Where applicable, 6th SOS personnel could also attend courses and training with general purpose advisors as part of their 6 to 8-month mission ready training program. As they double their capacity, training requirements will increase and a local advisor training center could provide an additional avenue to accelerate qualifications. A Hurlburt Field facility versus the proposed CBAT locations is also more likely to offer a single TDY location for all 3 Tiers of training, which equates to reduced travel costs.

Finally, General North, Commander of Central Command Air Forces, at the end of the 8 March 2007 IPT briefing stressed, "Training must be tailored for each specific mission."¹³² He was expounding upon comments from Afghanistan Provincial Reconstruction Team members complaining about pre-deployment training focused on Iraq and not applicable to the different operating environment in Afghanistan. This same caution should be applied to the pre-deployment advisor training program and lead decision makers to the conclusion that only a dedicated training center conducting all aspects of training could achieve this goal.

¹³² Notes, Building Air Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan Integrated Product Team Final Report, Video Tele Conference, 8 March 2007.

Building an Iraq Flying Training Squadron

As advisor preparations are improving, it is important to set the stage for success in Iraq as well. As CAFTT establishes the flying training squadron, a review of lessons learned from the C-130 mission highlights issues CAFTT should address early in program development. If properly addressed, the flying squadron can avoid or mitigate many of the challenges confronted by C-130 advisors and concentrate on more important training issues. Most importantly, CAFTT has already taken the essential first step of increasing the number of personnel assigned to CAFTT staff and HHQ advisor positions. The increase enables CAFTT to dedicate a sufficient number of personnel to influence early development of this new capability and encourage the IqAF HHQ to establish certain policies and guidelines before training starts.

Organizational Structure and Functional Leaders

CAFTT should encourage the HHQ to assign an Iraqi program manager or program office within the Flying Operations Directorate of A-7 Training to oversee all flying training. Subsequently, CAFTT should assign a specific advisor to this HHQ functional area to assist in resolving issues and developing flying training policy and guidance.

The CAFTT advisor can then advise and assist the HHQ in establishing an organizational structure for the flying training squadrons, hiring the right individuals for instructor duties, and stressing the importance of assigning functional leaders as soon as possible. Ideally, HHQ should assign Iraqi instructor pilots to the squadron and simultaneously designate their functional positions within the organization. An established organizational structure with assigned functional leaders will also accelerate process development and training progress.

Through early development of a squadron structure and functional leaders, advisors will be able to initiate a train-the-trainer program for flight instruction and functional duties. Early assignment of functional duties will compel Iraqi personnel to participate in a collaborative process to build needed functional products and tasks. This is especially important in a flying training squadron where training, documentation, and scheduling are important aspects of an efficient and effective pilot production program.

Iraqi Personnel Selections

As the IqAF begins assigning personnel to the flying training squadron, CAFTT should attempt to work with the HHQ to select the right individuals for the mission. As the flying training course will be taught in English, CAFTT should insist instructor candidates test and complete any required language training before starting instructor upgrade. When the Iraqi instructor candidate arrives in the squadron, 100 percent of the available training time should be dedicated to preparation for the flying training mission.

For Iraqi maintenance personnel, CAFTT should work with HHQ to build a maintenance capability with junior officers initially assigned to leadership positions traditionally held by NCOs in the United States. Junior officers are better prepared to fill these roles and the organization will need effective leadership in these positions to ensure appropriate processes and standards are established. As warrant officers complete the proposed maintenance supervisor training, the IqAF can transition them into leadership positions with junior officer serving as unit instructors.

As the training aircraft are all manufactured by US companies, the TOs and maintenance manuals will be in English. Therefore, maintenance personnel should also be required to obtain a specified ECL and complete all language training prior to initiating aviation maintenance

training. Given the anticipated lower starting levels for most warrant officers and enlisted personnel, language training in maintenance is likely to take longer than language training for the instructor pilots and should begin immediately. This is also an excellent opportunity for CAFTT to work with DLI to implement a reading comprehension-only course to accelerate qualification for initial cadre in each of the new flight training squadrons.

Training Timelines and Schedules

CAFTT must further advise the HHQ to establish training timelines and associated training schedules prior to starting actual training. Similar to US operations, the first step in determining the number of training days required to complete the program will be based on several factors: the number of syllabus flights required; maximum number of students per class; maximum number aircraft and sorties per day; maximum number of aircraft that can be safely airborne in the training airspace; and maximum number of sorties the airfield, daylight, and weather permit.¹³³ IqAF HHQ must also determine what Muslim and Iraqi holidays pilot training students will observe and the level of training during Ramadan. After consideration of all of these factors, the HHQ and CAFTT can estimate the number of training days required. At this point, the HHQ must make the important determination of what training schedule to establish for pilot training students. Once the training schedule is established, the HHQ can calculate the number of weeks needed for the entire program.

CAFTT should strongly encourage the HHQ to publish the overall training timeline and student schedule in a flying training regulation or instruction. First, it establishes a student work schedule and eliminates any doubt to the number of training days. Second, it provides a baseline

¹³³ Brig Gen Zamzow, Air Education and Training Command, Director of Operations, Briefing, "International Flying Training," 8 November 2006, slide 4.

to track student progress. Third, the student schedule will drive the Iraqi instructor schedule and force them to make adjustments if students fall behind. Finally, it is easier to convince the Iraqis to establish standards before the program begins and then hold them accountable, than trying to develop standards during mission execution.

Finally, HHQ should also establish a leave policy for all training programs. It should limit student leave to emergencies-only and set a limit to the number of instructors on leave to help maintain a consistent training schedule and capability. .

Decision Authorities

CAFTT, initial squadron advisors, IqAF HHQ, and Iraqi squadron leadership also need to work together to delineate decision authorities upfront. The delineation should determine the decision authority for sensitive student pilot issues. In a hierarchal organization, the C-130 AST saw reluctance on the part of Iraqi instructors to fail a student on a particular flight. By specifying the authority at the instructor, squadron commander, or HHQ level, it will specify who has the authority and allow advisors to mentor the instructors according to HHQ desires.

HHQ should also specify who has authority to wash someone back a class or remove them from the program for lack of progress and what supporting documentation is required. CAFTT should be careful recommending that these decisions reside at the squadron-level as political sensitivities will likely make the squadron commander incapable or unwilling to make the right decision in most cases.

These are just some of the initial steps CAFTT can take to set the foundation for success. They eliminate administrative decisions which consume vast amounts of training time and distract from the primary mission. Any decision removed from the table of negotiation and

discussion will benefit advisors and enable them to focus on training Iraqis to assume the overall flying training mission.

Training Pipelines

The training pipelines are the second critical aspect of ensuring IqAF self-sustainment across all levels of the force. Therefore, it is important to ensure the training pipelines are properly focused on needed training and constructed in a manner to effectively teach the required material in the minimum amount of time. This section will provide recommendations to refine the two training pipelines based on C-130 lessons learned.

Pilot Candidate Pipeline

The pilot candidate pipeline provides acceptable tracks for obtaining the number of candidates needed for the flying training program. However, a few changes and stipulations should be inserted into the program to make it more effective. First, CAFTT should eliminate the combination of indoctrination and OTS training with English language training. The DLI English language program requires an intensive learning environment and full immersion. Conducting training in Arabic for half the day dilutes English language training, interferes with Air Force professional education, and presents a less than ideal learning environment for both. Additionally, the C-130 mission provided ample proof that half-day English programs have a difficult time producing the desired English proficiency results.

As an alternative, indoctrination and OTS should be reduced to eight-week programs dedicated exclusively to learning the necessary skills to be a junior officer. The remaining eight-weeks should shift to the English language portion of the training and constitute a 32-week

program. Using the DLI standards from Table 4, this would allow students scoring less than 29 to reach a score of 65-70 in the allotted time and all other starting scores to easily exceed the required ECL of 75. In accordance with DLI standards, a full 36-week course is required for student scoring less than 29 to reach an ECL score of 75. Given the difficult training environment, a full 36-week course is a more realistic chance of achieving the desired graduation rate.

Similar to flying training, CAFTT should encourage the IqAF HHQ to establish student training schedules beforehand. The schedules should provide for at least the minimum of 30 hours of language training each week. New cadets attending English language training at NAMAB are adhering to a six-day on and one-day off schedule, receiving six-hours of English each day, and showing good progress at the six-week point.¹³⁴ If CAFTT can convince the HHQ to codify this 6 and 1 schedule for 36-weeks of English training, it would establish the best opportunity for achieving the desired score in the allotted time regardless of the starting ECL. Meanwhile, DLI should begin tracking student progress to either confirm existing DLI estimates or create new baselines for training in Iraq to assist CAFTT in developing future training program estimates.

CAFTT should also work with HHQ program managers to ensure ECL scores are a prerequisite for entering the flying training program. A process of testing every eight weeks with target scores could track progress. If a student failed to achieve a target score on two consecutive tests, they should be able to wash back one class. If the student is unable to achieve the ECL of 75 at the completion of training with the second class, they should be removed from pilot training consideration and assigned to another IqAF duty not requiring English proficiency.

¹³⁴ Beverly Hall, Defense Language Institute, Supervisor of English Language Program, New Al Muthana Air Base, to author, email, 13 February 2007.

This testing process would motivate the student and provide a process to measure progress throughout the program with known benchmarks and consequences.

Maintenance Supervisor Pipeline

The maintenance supervisor pipeline also needs further refinement and definition to ensure effective training. All of the recommendations regarding English training for the pilot candidates apply to warrant officer training as well. If the C-130 advisor experience is an accurate depiction of all warrant officers, they may lack sufficient motivation to complete training and achieve the target ECL score. In order to increase motivation for warrant officers demonstrating leadership potential, CAFTT should recommend the IqAF institute a tiered bonus system similar to Afghanistan for those achieving and maintaining English proficiency.¹³⁵ Money is a universal motivator, may provide the proper incentive, and compensates personnel for obtaining a needed skill within the Air Force.

CAFTT should also monitor the courseware provided for the WOTS portion of the pipeline. The ultimate goal should be to transition warrant officers from simple followers, to active followers, and eventually leaders within the IqAF. To this end, the training must completely redefine warrant officer duties, expectations, and responsibilities in the new IqAF. The training must ingrain a sense of purpose and confidence in the warrant officer force to take charge in their areas of responsibilities. Junior officers should receive similar indoctrination on warrant officer responsibilities, the importance of delegating responsibility, and benefits of relying on the warrant officer expertise. If at all possible, Iraqi warrant officers should teach these courses to reinforce their new leadership role.

¹³⁵ Padilla, Afghanistan National Army Air Corps Assistance Team Outbrief, (FOUO) slide 23.

In building leaders, training warrant officers along side junior officers is appropriate, as both need the same leadership skills to be successful. The combined training should contribute to building respect between the two groups as well. The training must also include courses and exercises on critical thinking to fill the hole in their primary school education. Critical thinking is absolutely essential in working through the multitude of challenges and decisions confronting a maintenance supervisor. Furthermore, warrant officers capable of critical thinking are more capable of contributing to future development and improvements within the Air Force as a whole.

The hardest part of making a transition to a more professional warrant officer force with increased responsibilities will be convincing warrant officers in the field that this is the right course. During Iraqi C-130 training, any warrant officer attempting to take charge or show initiative was quickly confronted with a lack of cooperation from the other warrant officers. Senior and mid-level officers will also need convincing before they will have the confidence to delegate new responsibilities and authorities to qualified warrants.

For these reasons, the advisors must work with the various indoctrination programs and HHQ to ensure only those capable of assuming responsibilities and leading other enlisted personnel are allowed to graduate and assume leadership positions in Iraqi squadrons. If Iraqis fail to eliminate warrant officers incapable of leadership roles, the initiative to transition technical expertise and enlisted leadership from junior officers to warrant officers will fail. Warrant officers will be incapable of demonstrating expertise or leadership and senior officers will lose faith in future graduates. Ultimately, CAFTT must work with the HHQ to enforce standards, if they have any hope of a successful transition.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

A review of the C-130 advisor mission highlighted the unique challenges of Iraqi advisor missions due to the difference in language, culture, and living environment. Through this process, the paper identified expected challenges for future advisor missions and generated clear recommendations for pre-deployment advisor and theater training plans. The implementation of these initial steps will certainly mitigate and avoid known issues and provide a solid foundation for near and long-term Iraqi program and advisor success.

The SAF/IA IPT has made its decision and acquired GWOT funding for a dedicated advisor training center co-located with the CBAT. Yet, the loss in training timeline flexibility, combat skills course tailoring, and synergy with AFSOC units are identifiable drawbacks to the selected course of action. While the final CBAT location is still under consideration, AETC should take the initiative and proceed with a site survey of the Hurlburt Field area to determine the feasibility of an Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center and explore the long-term benefits of co-locating a training center with 6th SOS and USAFSOS in potential synergies and economies of scale.

An Expeditionary Air Advisor Training Center could tailor each advisor course, draw on local expertise in mission, culture, and combat skills, adjust overall training timelines, and best

meet the needs of the war fighter and home station commanders. The fact that funding is already secured and AETC is moving forward creates a limited window for a change. AETC must act now to reevaluate the final IPT decision to avoid sunk costs and locking the Air Force into the CBAT option. For general purpose forces tasked to execute the difficult Iraq advisor mission, the most effective training option should override minimal cost saving and limited redundant training.

In addition to pre-deployment training, CAFTT can increase the likelihood of advisor success through early coordination with the IqAF HHQ and implementation of the recommended flying training policy and guidance initiatives. By establishing guidance and policy early, the issues are removed from the discussion and allow the advisors, Iraqi instructors, and HHQ to focus on issues impacting squadron operations and student progression. The established standards create a self-imposed timeline, which advisors can use to encourage Iraqi compliance with existing decisions and training schedules.

For training pipelines, the recommended changes are simple and should increase the number of candidates completing the training and available for pilot training or maintenance supervisor positions. English language training with its required test score will be the biggest stumbling block for all training pipelines. However, 36-weeks of English-only language training with set benchmarks and the ability to track progress should create the proper learning environment and motivation to achieve the desired ECL score. Again, the most important factor in achieving success is an IqAF HHQ committed to a consistent and intensive training schedule with a solid accountability system. The IqAF must also maintain standards and graduate only qualified personnel or the entire system will fail to achieve the desired results and chance for self-sufficiency will be lost.

There are always challenges when training and advising foreign forces, but proper preparation of Air Force advisors and understanding of the foreign force's military culture and unique operating environment are keys to success. As CENTAF moves forward with building Iraqi airpower and expanding the Air Force role in Iraq, it must continually assess conditions on the ground and make the necessary changes for improvement. It should also begin requiring mission commanders to compile comprehensive lessons learned at the end of their tours to build a solid database for future planning efforts. The Air Force has tremendous expertise and manpower and coupled with proper understanding and sufficient timeline will be effective in building and sustaining Iraqi airpower for years to come.

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